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ABSTRACT

In education, it is necessary to look at students who are marginalized, and excluded, who is centered or privileged, and how, through academic discourse, silences are created, sustained, and legitimized. The three papers in this collection explore the politics of silencing and voice in education. "It's More Covert Today': The Importance of Race in Shaping Parents' Views of the School" by Annette Lareau focuses on the ways in which certain types of parental culture and discourse are privileged in schools, leading to the construction of an "ideal type" of parental involvement. Parents who do not fit this construction are outside the bounds of what is acceptable for a parent, and their ideas, no matter how salient, are rebuffed. Lois Weis, in "White Male Working Class Youth: An Exploration of Relative Privilege and Loss," focuses on the ways in which white male working class identity is taking shape under the restructured economy of the 1980s and 1990s. In particular, ways in which young men are reaffirming the discourses of white male power and privilege in spite of an economy that increasingly denies them this privilege are examined. Michelle Fine, in "The 'Public' in Public Schools: The Social Construction/Constriction of Moral Communities," examines a third set of issues related to silencing, the ways in which public schools, supposed to be universally accessible moral communities, engage in patterns of systematic exclusion and yet justify these patterns as being for the common good. (SLD)

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Special Studies in Teaching and Teacher Education
Number Seven

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Schooling and the Silenced "Others": Race and Class in Schools

Lois Weis, Michelle Fine and Annette Lareau

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Philip G. Altbach
General Editor, GSE Publications

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Elizabeth Leu
Associate Director for Research

Introduction

Lois Weis, Michelle Fine and Annette Lareau

Michel Foucault, Maxine Greene, Patti Lather and others have turned our attention to the issue of silencing -- the shadowing of things not said, those forbidden to name that function alongside what can be said.[1] The questions of who says what, how, under what circumstances, to whose benefit, must all be addressed in our post-modern world. In education, we look at who is marginalized and excluded, who is centered and privileged, and how, through academic discourse, silences are created, sustained and legitimated. It is within the genre of exploring the politics of silencing and voice -- what gets said and left unsaid -- that we came together to publish this set of papers.

Two political/scholarly projects are suggested by serious analyses of silencing. To begin with, it is important to unravel how power and privilege operate through universities and schools to nurture, sustain and legitimate silencing. Some of this work has been taken up, for example, by Roslyn Mickelson, Melvin Oliver and Stephen Smith who examine how racist hiring practices are performed in the name of affirmative action, by Mara Sapon-Shaevin who demonstrates how classist tracking practices are institutionalized in the name of "giftedness", and by Michelle Fine who unravels sexist and heterosexist curriculum delivered in the name of sex education.[2] By analyzing the policies and practices which occupy the institutional center and sustain silence, and by unpacking who has been privileged by these policies and practices, the deeply institutionalized nature of silencing becomes visible.

As our second political/scholarly project, we seek to hear "beyond silenced voices". We need not only understand the oppressive nature of policies, discourses and practices that silence, but also those policies and practices that solicit and listen closely to the words, critiques, dreams and fantasies of those who have dwelt at the margins. Thus, as bell hooks invites[3], we must move discourse from the margins to the center and collect data on the voices of children and adolescents who have been expelled from the centers of their schools and the centers of our culture: to

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[1] M. Foucault, The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Vol. 7, (New York: Vintage Books, 1990); M. Greene, The Dialectic of Freedom (New York: Teachers College Press, 1988); P. Lather, Getting Smart (Boston: Routledge, 1990).

[2] L. Weis and M. Fine, Beyond Silenced Voices (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992).

[3] b. hooks, Talking Back, Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black (Boston: South End Press, 1989).

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hear the voices of lesbian and gay students who have been assaulted in their schools but are organizing as a community of activists, to listen to young women and men across racial/ethnic and class lines, struggling for new identities amidst a restructured corporate America accompanied by de-industrialization which has shattered their known lives and those of their parents. Further, we ask teachers and parents of all communities to help us make sense of a public education system deeply fractured along race and class lines, increasingly devoid of material resources, and at the same time besieged by previously unknown forms of violence. After all is said and done, we see that many teachers still do teach, that most parents do parent as best they can, and many children still do learn. We hear a discursive underground of voices which we, as educators and social theorists, must be willing to understand. This discursive underground -- of students, parents and teachers -- flourishes at the margins of our public schools. These voices need to be heard and centered if schools are to become democratic public spheres.

Our three papers come together to join these two projects of deconstructuring the center and eavesdropping at the margins. Annette Lareau focuses on the ways in which certain types of parental culture and discourse are privileged in schools, leading to the construction of an "ideal type" of parent involvement. Parents who do not fit this construction fall outside the bounds of what constitutes acceptable behavior for a parent; their ideas, no matter how salient, are rebuffed. Lareau examines particularly the ways in which the construction of the ideal parent as supportive and cooperative vis-á-vis the school acts to exclude lower class and working class black parents who are suspicious of the school. While upper middle class black parents are equally suspicious in some ways, they are able to muster the cultural capital necessary to comply with educators' vision of the ideal parent role. Thus only the voices of certain parents are acknowledged as legitimate in school; the others are not heard at all, or seen only as noise.

Lois Weis focuses on the ways in which white male working class identity is taking shape under the restructured economy of the 1980s and 1990s. In particular, she examines the ways in which young men are reaffirming the discourses of white male power and privilege in spite of an economy which increasingly denies them this privilege. In fact, the movement of the economy is eroding the relative power of the male wage packet as well paid laboring jobs are being phased out, and both men and women are occupying jobs in the relatively less well paid service sector. This is occurring at the same time that young men are asserting their right to power and privilege in the home/family sphere. Weis suggests that when accompanied by

virulent racism, the secular New Right may offer a powerful discourse through which these as yet individually expressed sentiments among white youth may become collectively expressed. If so, the schools need to break the silence surrounding these developments and address them directly. Anything other than an attempt to break through this set of silences means that our educational institutions are part of the problem.

Michelle Fine examines a third set of issues relating to silencing. She asks: how do public schools, which are supposed to be universally accessible moral communities, engage in patterns of systematic exclusion and yet justify these patterns of exclusion as the "common good"? Through three case studies of public secondary schools in which systematic group exclusion has occurred, her analysis pierces educational ideologies of "merit", "choice" and "tradition", as they have justified exiling students from public education. Fine challenges us all to probe beneath the surface of what have become accepted and supposedly neutral ideologies to explore the typically veiled dynamics of moral exclusion from the public sphere of public education.

This set of papers was prepared for a symposium on class and race at the 1992 annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association. We put the papers together to stimulate discussion around this increasingly important set of issues. We invite you at this point into our text.

"It's More Covert Today": The Importance of Race in Shaping Parents' Views of the School

Annette Lareau
Temple University

In recent years there have been important developments in efforts to understand the role of schools in the maintenance of social inequality. Although some scholars have continued to develop models of status attainment,[1] many sociologists and anthropologists have turned their attention to issues of reproduction and resistance.[2] In the latter educational studies, the work of the French social thinker Pierre Bourdieu has been especially influential, particularly his notion of cultural capital.[3] By cultural capital, Bourdieu means "institutionalized, i.e., widely shared high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, goods and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion".[4]

Through the concept of cultural capital, coupled with his notions of habitus, field and symbolic domination, Bourdieu seeks to weave a vision of structuring structures within which individuals make choices. In this illumination of the social construction of taste, Bourdieu offers a nuanced vision of class conflict, where choices regarding, for example, clothing styles, make-up, hair fashions, furniture, food choices and presentation embody class positions and are chosen in opposition to other class locations.

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[1] K. Alexander, D.R. Entwisle, and M. Thompson, "School Performance, Status Relations, and the Structure of Sentiment: Bringing the Teacher Back In," American Sociological Review 52 (1987): 665-682; W.H. Sewell and R.M. Hauser, "The Wisconsin Longitudinal Study of Social and Psychological Factors in Aspirations and Achievements," Research in Sociology of Education and Socialization, Vol. 1, ed. A.C. Kerckhoff (Greenwich: JAI Press, 1980), pp. 59-100.

[2] J. MacCloud, Ain't No Making It (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987); L. Weis, Working Class Without Work (New York: Methuen, 1990); A. Lareau, Home Advantage: Social Class and Parental Intervention in Elementary Education (London and Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1989); L.J.D. Wacquant, "Making Class: The Middle Class(es) in Social Theory and Social Structure," in Bringing Class Back In, eds. S.G. McNall, R. Levine, and R. Fantasia (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), pp. 39-64; P. Cookson Jr. and C. Persell, Preparing for Power: America's Elite Boarding Schools (New York: Basic Books, 1985); P.E. Willis, Learning to Labour (Westmead: Saxon House, 1977).

[3] P. Bourdieu, "What Makes a Social Class? On the Theoretical and Practical Existence of Groups," Berkeley Journal of Sociology 32 (1987): 1-17; "Forms of Capital," Handbook of Theory and Research for Sociology of Education, ed. John G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), pp. 241-258; Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984); Outline of a Theory of Practice, trans. R. Nice (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977); "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction," Power and Ideology in Education, eds. J. Karabel and A.H. Halsey (New York: Oxford, 1977), pp. 487-511.

[4] M. Lamont and A. Lareau, "Cultural Capital: Allusions, Gaps, and Glissandos," Sociological Theory 6 (1988): 157.

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Bourdieu's concepts have the potential to illuminate important problems in efforts to understand the role of schools in the reproduction of inequality. In particular, his theoretical work emphasizes the importance of dominant institutions in setting arbitrary standards and the impact of class position on highly valued knowledge and behavior. Empirical work has generally supported his analysis, including my own earlier work which showed how white upper middle class parents pass on educational advantages to their children by shrewdly activating their cultural capital.[5]

While holding considerable promise for research in education, Bourdieu's own empirical work often has been disappointing. His research focuses on documenting the impact of social structures on individuals' cultural choices, particularly their choices within the home. What is missing in his work to date is a careful study of the actual standards promoted by gatekeeping institutions such as schools. Bourdieu's work simply implies that high status cultural practices should be profitable in dominant institutions. Without documentation of the actual standards of institutions, a crucial part of the argument is missing.[6] Researchers have had difficulty unravelling "moments of reproduction" where shrewd displays of cultural capital yield social profits. Conversely, it is difficult to illuminate "moments of social exclusion" where efforts to marshall cultural resources are rebuffed. In short, the failure to study explicitly the standards of dominant institutions leads to an incomplete and distorted vision of the potential benefits of cultural capital.

Compounding this problem is the fact that the United States has a far more heterogeneous population than France. In the United States, social class does have an important influence on children's school experiences, but there are also signs that race mediates the impact of class. John Ogbu correctly points out, for example, that rates of school success are lower for blacks than whites of all social class backgrounds, including privileged black families.[7] Although a lively national debate is continuing on the significance of race and class,[8] the possibility remains

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[5] Lareau, [n. 2 above].

[6] In addition, it is implausible to think that all cultural practices will be equally valuable in all moments of organizational life. Instead, displays of cultural capital are probably situationally specific.

[7] J. U. Ogbu, "Class Stratification, Race Stratification, and Schooling," in Class, Race, and Gender in American Education, ed. L. Weis (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988), pp. 163-189.

[8] M. Katz (ed.), The Underclass Debate (forthcoming); and, W.J. Wilson, The Declining Significance of Race (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

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that teachers and school administrators are adopting standards of behavior that are easier for white children and parents to comply with than blacks and other racial minorities.[9]

In this paper I report on the results of a study of twenty-four families of twelve white and twelve black third-grade children in a small midwestern community. Drawing on my participant-observation of the classroom, parent-teacher conferences, and school activities as well as intensive interviews with mothers and fathers and adults working with the children, I argue that the school had a clear and narrowly defined standard for parent involvement in education. This view, which is echoed by national organizations and has been discussed by other researchers,[10] emphasizes the importance of parents being positive and supportive and deferring to teachers' definitions of children's educational needs. Focusing on the twelve black families in the study, I show that black parents of all social classes were suspicious and distrustful of the school in the area of race relations. To be sure, social class had an important impact on how parents coped with their concerns. Nevertheless, overall it was easier for white parents than black parents to comply with the schools' standards that they be supportive and positive in their interactions with teachers. This suggests that the compliance of parents of a higher social class position and a more privileged racial background was facilitated by the standard of behavior adopted by the school.

Research Methods

This study took place in a small midwestern community, "Lakeville" (approximately 25,000), located two hours from a metropolitan center and dominated by farming, coal mining, light manufacturing, retail stores, state government offices, and a university. The town had one public school system which enrolled approximately 1,500 elementary school students; the district enrolled fifty-two percent white, forty-four percent black, three percent Asian, and one percent Hispanic students in six schools. Forty percent of the children were

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[9] S.B. Heath, "What No Bedtime Story Means: Narrative Skills at Home and School," Language in Society 11,2 (1982): 49-76.

[10] D. Lortie, School-Teacher: A Sociological Study (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977); J.L. Epstein, "Toward a Theory of Family-School Connections: Teacher Practices and Parent Involvement," Social Interventions: Potential and Constraints, eds. K. Hurrelmann, F. Kaufmann, and F. Losel (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1987).

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classified as low income (i.e., eligible for a free lunch or receiving public assistance).[11]

Quigley school (a pseudonym) enrolled around 200 students in grades one through three. The school was located in an overwhelmingly white and affluent part of the town; the superintendent, principal and teachers were all white with the exception of one African-American first grade teacher. The school secretary was black and the janitor was white. I began my participant-observation of two third grade classrooms in Quigley school in September and continued twice a week in each classroom through December and less frequently (e.g., three times a month) through June. Both teachers, Mrs. Erickson and Mrs. Nelson, were white middle-aged women with about twenty-five years of teaching experience. Each classroom had thirty children (considerably more than the district average of twenty-four students per class). I stratified the classrooms into groups by race and social class (based on information from the children's emergency cards); a random sample of twenty-four children was chosen for further study.

As Table 1 reveals, social class and racial membership were heavily confounded in the study (as they are in the general population). The study is essentially a comparison of white upper middle class families and African-American working class and lower class family patterns. The relative lack of upper middle class African-American families is part of a national trend,[12] but the absence of white lower class families is a particular weakness in this study. About one-quarter of the children lived in single parent homes and this was also heavily interwoven with social class position. All of the lower class children, for example, came from single parent homes but only one of the children in the working class group and none of the upper middle class lived in a single parent household.

During the spring and summer, separate two-hour interviews were conducted in the home with the mother, father, or guardian.[13] Ninety minute interviews were also held with educators (e.g., teachers, principal, superintendent and school secretary) and with other adults working in organizations serving

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[11] This differs considerably from the town's racial population which was seventy-three percent white, eighteen percent black, and nine percent other. The racial composition was not, however, linked to a heavy private school enrollment. While there were three private or parochial schools in the city, they enrolled only 130 children between kindergarten and twelfth grade.

[12] G.D. Jaynes and R.M. Williams, Jr. (eds.), A Common Destiny: Blacks and American Society (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1989).

[13] One family refused to participate and another family moved several times and could not be contacted; both were replaced with other comparable families. In addition, in three families the mother, but not the father, agreed to the interview.

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children (e.g., Brownie leaders, soccer coaches, swim teachers, dance instructors). In all, interviews were conducted with forty parents in this school, eight educators and twenty-six adults working with children.

With an intensive case study, one cannot, of course, use the results to generalize to a broader population. The results can, however, be used to challenge and to modify existing conceptual models in the field and to stimulate further research.

The Importance of Being Positive

Although the teachers and school administrators in Lakeville had widely differing personalities and classroom styles, they offered similar, in fact almost identical, visions of desirable and undesirable parents. The educators in this study wanted parents to be positive and supportive. They also wanted parents to trust the educator's judgment and assessment. The Superintendent of the Lakeville district, for example, said:

> I'd use words such as positive, encouraging, [and] supportive... Rather than being so defensive, trying to find out exactly what the circumstances were in the situation...trying to ask questions that zero in on what the problem is.

The importance of parents being "supportive" was also stressed by one of the third grade teachers when asked about the qualities of an ideal parent:

> [Parents] that supported the teachers. There are so many parents that automatically say that you are wrong and my child is right. The parents that I enjoy working with the most were the ones who would listen to how the child is and what they needed to work on and didn't criticize you.

Conversely, the principal described unhelpful parents in the following way:

> They tend not to be supportive. They tend not to support the teacher. Maybe it's from some problem they had in school or something. There just tends to be a distrust of

> the teaching field in general. They are very quick to criticize and feel that the school isn't fair and that the school is not helping their child... There is no support for homework if they get behind.

Teachers repeatedly praised parents who, in turn, had praised them. Teachers liked parents who were deferential, who expressed empathy with the difficult character of teachers' work, and who had detailed information about their children's school experience. Teachers often stressed the importance of parents "understanding" their children's educational situations. By "understanding", however, teachers meant that parents should accept the teacher's definition of children's educational and social performance. In one instance, Mrs. Erickson had refused Faith Newmann's parents' request to move their daughter to a more advanced reading group. She disliked it when Faith's, and other parents, failed to grasp and accept her evaluation of a child:

> Like Leon, they just don't understand. And Andora...and Tony... Generally it's the ones who are having the most academic trouble, but not always... I don't feel that Faith's parents really understand the problem that she is having. She has a vocabulary deficit. She does not understand a lot of simple, everyday words. When we are discussing a story it's very obvious.

Parents who were considered supportive had very detailed information but, more importantly, were deferential:

> Jim Hughs' mother had a reasonable, rational, good understanding of her child's talents, strengths, and weaknesses... She did precisely what I said.

By contrast, Mrs. Nelson was critical of a mother she felt was critical of her:

> I found her, basically, probably one of the most intolerant parents I had [in the class]... She got pretty impatient with me. I tried to tell her he was too young.

> She was wanting to do all these things anyway. I think she thought it was my fault if he didn't accomplish the level she thought he should.[14]

Teachers' attitudes towards parents were strikingly similar, despite their varied styles. In their classrooms, teachers approached the children in a radically different fashion and exuded different levels of warmth and empathy in their interactions with children and parents. Mrs. Erickson was quite structured in the classroom and often formal and businesslike in her conversations with parents. Mrs. Nelson's classroom had a relaxed atmosphere that often included spontaneous shifts in the curriculum; she bubbled with enthusiasm and chatter in her contacts with parents. Nevertheless, both teachers welcomed a restricted set of behaviors from parents: positive comments, acceptance of the teacher's assessment of a child, and expressions of support and empathy.

In adopting this stance, the educators excluded important parental behaviors (negative comments, challenges to the teacher's assessment, and criticisms) from being considered legitimate and acceptable forms of parent involvement in schooling. As I show below, parents who expressed these criticisms, challenges, and negative comments risked damaging their relationship with the teacher, generating teacher disappointment, anger and frustration.

The Perspective of Black Parents

White parents and black parents had many common experiences with their children and teachers; both groups coped with bus schedules, homework, special science projects, and report cards. They varied, however, in their level of information about the school and their involvement in school activities. Interviews with parents revealed that white and black parents also appeared to have different levels of generalized trust towards the school, particularly in the area of race relations. White parents generally, but not always, had positive dispositions

[14] In addition to their concern with social-psychological factors, the teachers had concrete requests for the parents of third graders. Mrs. Nelson asked parents, as an "absolute minimum" to make sure their children read for thirty minutes four times a week. Mrs. Erickson also stressed the importance of reading to build vocabulary. More generally, she wanted parents to spend time with children: "I like to have parents that are interested in what their kids are doing and will take the time to sit down with them every day or at least provide a place for time and a time that is consistent.... The best thing that parents can give their children is a time and a place... The ones that are really interested will take the time to check them out and see what they have to do and look over their [home]work."

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towards teachers and schooling. Although upper middle class parents were somewhat more enthusiastic than working class parents, none of the white parents appeared to be worried that their child would be treated unfairly. Nor were the white parents, in general, concerned about race relations at the school. Although one or two parents discussed problems of behavior that they felt were connected to race, most parents, as most Americans, appeared to believe that race problems were a thing of the past.[15]

Black parents, however, had a different view. Many were concerned about race relations and concerned that their children were being discriminated against by educators. Not all black parents shared these views; a few parents reported no problems or concerns regarding race relations. The suspicion and distrust of most of the twelve families in the sample, however, was marked. Moreover, social class did not appear to be connected to parents' worries, although class did shape how parents constructed their interactions with teachers. In what follows, I examine upper middle class, working class, and lower class black families' views of educators, focusing primarily on the experience of one family within each social class.

Upper Middle Class Black Families

The upper middle class black parents, while few in number, had the most intense and positive relationships with teachers at the school. Mr. and Mrs. Irving stated:

> Personally, I feel that parents are most responsible for the education of their own kids. I believe. I think it's our responsibility to teach Shandra here at home, in addition to what she's learning at school. When Shandra first started at school she knew how to read and knew all of her numbers before she even started. So I think education really belongs, number one, first at home with the parent and school is like an assistant. They'll assist you in educating your kid and it's my responsibility to see that she learns how to read, write, whatever.

[15] Jaynes and Williams, [n. 12 above].

Mr. Irving, who had worked as a long-term substitute in the school system, had chosen not to become a teacher because of the poor salary opportunities. He now works as a laboratory technician in a manufacturing plant. He often works at night and makes a point of visiting the school on a regular basis during the day. As a teacher's aide noted:

> Her dad was in there a lot. He was at the school a lot. Some days he was just bringing her lunch or something, but he would ask me many questions. Probably every time he was in there [he] would ask, "How was she doing?" "Had she worked on this or that?" ... They seemed to want to do anything they could to help Shandra. She was a very smart student.

Not only did Mr. Irving supervise his daughter's progress, but he would occasionally make requests. When she was in first grade, for example, he requested that she be tested for consideration for the academically talented program. She was tested and admitted to the program.

Shandra's third grade teacher, Mrs. Nelson, had nothing but praise for Mr. and Mrs. Irving. She found them to be supportive and helpful. She wished that more parents would take such an active role in their children's schooling.

In the interviews, the parents' view of the school was not equally positive. The parents were concerned about black children, especially black boys, being treated unfairly. As Mrs. Irving stated:

> Just in talking to my friends that are teachers I get the distinct feeling that there is this undercurrent or something with black boys. There is always the one on detention; there is always the one being suspended. There is always the one.

As members of a black middle class church, the parents were friends with other middle class blacks, including several teachers. The black teachers shared with Mr. and Mrs. Irving their concerns about discrimination against black children by white teachers. As Mr. Irving stated:

> I've heard that some young black boys are maybe singled out more often for discipline than young white males. I've heard that before from the teachers who have seen it first hand... They'll maybe put one of the black boys on detention a lot faster than one of the white boys who maybe do the same things. I haven't seen it but I've heard people talk about it that work there that ought to know.

In addition to being worried about disciplinary patterns, Mr. Irving also complained that they put more black children in special education programs:

> It's like there are more black kids in that particular program and it seems like also that those kids tend to stay in the program all the way through school and when that happens they tend not to have a true high school education, you know, it's more like an eighth grade education because they're behind on everything. They're not taking normal classes. I don't think that's good... But I think they do it because they're getting money for it. You know, it's part of their budget so they look for little kids that they can put in there and have the federal money coming in.

When asked if he thought black children were being discriminated against he said:

> It's probably happening. I'm just considering the ratio between black teachers and white teachers; I would say it's happening... I think as long as you have blacks and whites there is going to be some kind of discrimination -- some kind of problem -- I don't think it's as bad as it used to be. It's kind of covert. You don't come out and see it now; it's more covert today.

Indeed, his wife appeared to see her husband's bi-monthly visits to the school as a precautionary step to prevent problems from developing:

> I guess, all in all, looking at my child I think she's been treated fairly. If she hadn't been, well we kind of visit the school.

Another black upper middle class father, Mr. Sawyer, was very critical of the school's failure in the area of race relations:

> I think that a lot of the teachers do not, cannot, relate to a lot of the black children and, because they cannot and do not, those kids are not getting what they need. As far as academic role models I think the school system at Quigley -- I don't think it's just Quigley, but probably the whole Lakeville school district can do more by providing more black role models, maybe by hiring more black teachers. I know they're out there. Getting more black role models -- blacks that have made it who are positive role models -- getting them to come into the classroom. I think that's important for those children to see role models because I think in society we don't have enough -- we are not offering enough role models. There needs to be some kind of liaison -- somebody that can speak and be able to relate to those kids.

Mr. Sawyer, the father of two boys, worked in the area of social services and volunteered in the classroom while his wife, a law school graduate, studied for the bar. He reported observing unequal treatment by race in the area of discipline:

> One thing that I was really upset about - I observed a lot of detentions being given and the kids that were in detention were primarily black and I know that it was not only the blacks who were trouble makers. I know that I was in the classroom with [Mrs.] Nelson and some of the white children -- I had to put a stop to [their behavior].

Mr. and Mrs. Sawyer separately complained about the lack of celebration of black heroes in the classroom (e.g., Martin Luther King's Birthday) and the relatively few positive black role models for children at school. Mr. and Mrs. Sawyer were also fearful of racial discrimination. They viewed Mr. Sawyer's volunteering as an effort to "keep an eye" on the situation:

> I think the kids are really going to be at a disadvantage and my wife and I are adamant both of our sons -- no matter what school they are in -- we will be there to keep an eye.

The teachers and the principal repeatedly praised Mr. Sawyer for his volunteer efforts. As Mrs. Nelson, the third grade teacher said:

> I found Karl's parents to be excellent... Their pastor said if you want to get involved in your child's life and what they are doing, volunteer at school. Mr. Sawyer did that.

The educators found Mr. Sawyer to be a particularly supportive parent. They were unaware of his apprehension and distrust of the teachers in the area of race relations. Thus, in both of these upper middle class black families, parents did comply with teachers' requests and standards for parent involvement. Privately, however, they harbored criticisms and concerns about racial discrimination.

Working Class Black Families

In other instances, parents' concerns about race relations and their criticisms of teachers' actions, had negative consequences for the overall character of the parent-teacher relationship. Within the working class families, for example, the Newman family had a difficult and unhappy relationship with the teacher. Mr. Newman had been a drug addict, became a born-again Christian, and started a small church in the community. He worked during the week as a barber; his wife, the associate pastor, worked as a beautician. Mrs. Newman was deeply unhappy about her daughter Faith's school year. When asked to describe the strengths of Mrs. Erickson as a teacher, she couldn't think of any:

> I haven't observed any strengths. She has average control of her class. Let's put it that way.

Mrs. Newman felt that a "wave of prejudice" was sweeping the country and the community:

> It's not Mrs. Erickson but it's the school system as a whole. Every now and then there is a wave of prejudice. A spirit of intimidation is placed on the children. Spirit of superior. There are differences made as far as the children are concerned. It's almost like the law in America is now. You find a black man that might commit a crime and he gets life for it and a white man might get off in a year and a half or he might get off with probation. So that's the state of the law in America. That's a thing that we have to live with and we are living with it right now.

Mrs. Newman complained that the school lavished attention on small holidays and then systematically ignored the celebration of black heroes:

> I've been over to the school all year and there are certain holidays, I mean like Halloween, for instance. [There were] witches and skeletons and what have you hitting you all in the face as you walk down the hall. I turned around and this big skeleton was hitting you in the face. There is a play on Washington's and Lincoln's birthdays. But then Martin Luther King is the only black person that is really kind of recognized in America. And they don't really. Most times they're saying that they might push a little out of them, but I still don't feel like they're giving as much effort as they should.
>
> It's just like Martin Luther King, he's our token. So let's talk about him, so what about the rest of the people. Who can they look at now and say? Who are the teachers pushing in the school system that is black? Do I hate you because you are white? If you are famous and whatever you did, we recognize anybody but then whites don't seem to recognize everybody. It's just certain people that they want to recognize. It's almost on the level with that particular race. Blacks are always put down. And then we want to know why do we get friction from our children? Or why do they act the way they do? This is the reason why.

During the school year, Mrs. Newman developed concerns regarding her daughter's schooling. She felt her child Faith should be in a reading group at grade level. She objected to the fact that she was in a reading group below grade level. She asked Mrs. Erickson repeatedly to move her up. Mrs. Erickson, who felt that Faith's vocabulary was inadequate for a higher group, refused. Mrs. Newman also felt her daughter was not being called on enough during class. She was concerned that the white teachers were being "snappy" towards the black children. As with Mr. Sawyer, she was concerned about uneven distribution of punishment:

> Maybe you don't realize you're making differences in whites or blacks. Those kids sit up under her every day. They know whether they are doing them right or wrong. They are out in the hallways. They know when the principal [said], this child did it and they are black. They get five days of detention. And this one [white child] just go in and stay in for recess. And these kinds of things. I mean children are going to tell. They are observant.

Mrs. Newman shared her concerns with the teacher, Mrs. Erickson, and the principal, Mrs. Hertman. She had a meeting with the principal about once a month during the school year and many conversations with the teacher. With an angry and confrontational style, she told the educators that they were treating black children differently than white children. The educators found her to be a hostile and destructive parent. As Mrs. Hertman states in discussing the child, Faith:

> She seems to be told that because she is black, this and this and this is so. I don't think I have ever met parents that were so prejudiced against white schools, white people, white history, white everything... I think she could just destroy what the schools are trying to do so quickly because she is really telling these people that the white teachers really don't like their children, that they are making a difference between the white child and the black child.

Miss Ulembart, the teacher's aide, felt that Mr. and Mrs. Newman's views were undermining authority relations at the school. Faith challenged the legitimacy

of Miss Ulembart's authority, complaining that she and other children were being punished because of their race:

> When I would try to correct her she would smart back at me. If she got in trouble because of her behavior she would say it was because I am prejudiced, not because she was running in the hallway or throwing something in the playground.

Mrs. Erickson also felt that parents would not defer to her own assessment of Faith's educational needs and lacked a good understanding of her educational needs. She also felt the parents were too critical of everyone, including their daughter, and that the child was "insecure":

> I think they put a lot of pressure on her... She would put something down on her paper and then she would look to see what the other one had and then change it. Maybe she would have it right in the first place but she is just so insecure.

In addition, while there were widespread allegations that Faith stole pens and pencils from other children in the third grade, Mrs. Erickson's efforts to broach the subject with the parents fell on deaf ears:

> They just said it was not possible, that she would do that. Yet some of these other parents have been in the same class for three or four years and [have] seen the same things going on.

Mrs. Newman's expression of her concerns damaged her relationship with her child's teacher. By the middle of the school year, Mrs. Erickson was attempting to avoid interacting with the Newmans. She found them angry for most of the year:

> They came in angry in January basically over her health grade. And then because there weren't enough black history pictures in the library. And angry that she had

> been tested and found to have a language delay and they refused to sign for the testing... I just thought I should leave well enough alone.

At the end of the year, Mrs. Erickson "boosted" her English grade because "I just didn't want to have a scene". She found them among the "most upsetting" parents in her teaching career; she particularly was upset by them raising their voices in conversation and "just out and out yelling".[16]

Rather than appreciate Mr. and Mrs. Newman's interest and concern for the school, the educators defined it as singularly unhelpful. The principal, Mrs. Hertman, saw only that Mrs. Newman did "damage":

> I just found her to be very upsetting... I think she is doing so much damage. She will not listen. You try to tell her about the volunteers and what is being done and the positive things and you try to tell her that white children are getting detentions too.
>
> She's the kind of person who makes me wake up in the middle to the night and I'm thinking what can I do, how can I reach this parent, what can be done to change her? I think she is doing so much damage.

Mrs. Newman, however, saw her actions as important and helpful for all of the children in the school.

Lower Class Black Families

The concerns about racial discrimination were also present in lower class black families, although the impact on family-school relationships differed. In these homes, parents tended to be less informed and less actively involved in schooling than parents in upper middle and some working class homes. One contributing factor may have been family structure. All five black children in the lower class families came from single-parent homes and two children lived with their grandmothers. In addition, lower class mothers appeared to place

[16] On the last day of school, Faith and Mrs. Newman separately gave Mrs. Erickson a hug. Mrs. Newman told Mrs. Erickson that "she wanted things to be better between us". Mrs. Newman said she would be tutoring some of the children over the summer in the tutoring program organized by their church. She also said she planned to be back next year to volunteer in the school, a suggestion which Mrs. Erickson responded to by warmly saying they needed volunteers.

responsibility for education with the teachers; there was a separation between home and school.[17] Regardless of the cause, lower class mothers often had few contacts with the school.

These few contacts between mothers and teachers, however, and the mothers' observations of their children's experiences, were important in shaping their views. For example, one mother, Mrs. Caldron, had been an alcoholic and a cocaine addict for most of the children's lives; she had been alcohol and drug free for two months. She lived in government financed housing projects with her children, but under her welfare subsidy she could not afford to have a telephone. Mrs. Cauldron's knowledge of school was limited. She did not know off-hand the name of her child's teacher, nor could she report what reading or math group he was in. She was unable to attend both parent-teacher conferences although the principal arranged for her to get a ride. Both times she called and canceled, Mrs. Erickson reported, and ultimately Mrs. Erickson and Mrs. Hertman went to see her:

> We had made arrangements to pick her up to come over here for a conference and then she got to a phone and canceled both in the fall and in the spring. She called and canceled. In the spring we [the principal and the teacher] just got in the car and went over there. So I did have that one meeting with her face to face.

Mrs. Erickon felt that the child, Doug, had learning problems that were connected to his home situation. She felt the lack of parent involvement in education was hurting his academic progress. Mrs. Cauldron, Doug's mother, had a different view. She objected to the view that school problems were linked to the home:

> Mrs. Hertman [the principal] is very arrogant. Very, very arrogant. She came to our house a couple of times. This was when I was drinking -- that's why I had to quit drinking because of my liver -- and when she came up I had to bring Doug home because of such-and-such a thing. And I asked Doug what was wrong with him and he didn't want to say nothing, but then he started talking

[17] Lareau, [n. 2 above].

> and she said that we needed to find out if something is going on in the home that is causing him to be having these problems. Why does it necessarily have to be going on in the home? How come it can't be y'all? Why does it have to be us -- the parent?

She was concerned that the school was treating black children unfairly, particularly the children from the projects:

> I don't know, it seems like every black kid out there is getting in trouble one way or the other, and it's mostly black project kids. She [the principal] is just hard on them. It seemed like every time I turned around Doug is on detention for something or other. So that's why I'm thinking they moved out there to a white kids' school because Quigley used to be nothing but white. Pauley [another school in the district] was mixed. Now that they are not at Pauley they are in a predominantly white area where, you know, black kids aren't supposed to be. And I don't think that's right.

Mrs. Caldron also objected to children attending a school in the white part of town and felt that this contributed to the racial discrimination at the school. When asked if she felt black children were being treated differently, she replied:

> I just feel that they do. They are being treated differently. For one thing they just got out there. They hadn't been there when the rest of that school was all white. So they weren't out there. So the kids that are still there get more seniority than these kids who are just coming in there. But it shouldn't be like that.

Mrs. Caldron had little contact with the school during the academic year. She requested spelling lists a few times, but Mrs. Erickson complained about her failure to respond to notes she sent home and to return forms needing her signature. Although Mrs. Caldron had negative and hostile feelings towards the school, she did not discuss these concerns with other parents, in part because she did not know

the mothers of any children in her child's classroom. She did not share her concerns with anyone, except her friend Hope:

> Me and this lady Hope, we talked about it but just us two. We just talk sometimes. She feels the same way I do and I feel the same way that she do. I feel that Mrs. Hertman is semi-prejudiced. I don't know about the rest of the teachers. I think Mrs. Erickson, she's semi-prejudiced too. Really, the only one I really liked was Mrs. Harrison and she's not even a teacher.

Thus, Mrs. Caldron, along with other lower class parents, shared the perspective that black children were being discriminated against at school. She responded to theses feelings quite differently than upper middle class parents, however. Unlike these parents, she did not monitor and oversee the school experience through volunteer work, nor did she attempt to intervene and change the character of the school experience. Instead, she simply made her observations and shared them with a few people. In contrast to upper middle class black parents who were embedded in dense social networks, her social networks beyond the kinship group were sparse.

Discussion

In A Common Destiny: Blacks and American Society, Jaynes and Williams summarize the state of black and white race relations in America today.[18] As part of this survey, they describe considerable distrust on the part of blacks of whites and white-dominated institutions. A national survey in 1979-1980, for example, found that forty percent of blacks believe that "on the whole...most white people want to...keep blacks down".[19] In a similar vein, only seven percent of blacks in the 1982 General Social Survey reported that they feel they can trust most white people.[20] These and other measures of "black alienation" from white society do not vary according to education and family income.

[18] Jaynes and Williams, [n. 12 above], p. ix.

[19] Ibid., p. 134.

[20] Eighty-two percent reported they feel they can trust some white people and eleven percent reported that they can trust no white people. Ibid., p. 135.

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Although some researchers, particularly John Ogbu,[21] have emphasized the importance of broader racial relations in shaping children's school experiences, many studies have subsumed racial experiences under the category of social class. Particularly in the area of parent involvement in education, studies have focused on clarifying how and why social class increases parent involvement in schooling.[22] Others have pointed to the importance of organizational factors, teachers' classroom leadership styles and school district policies, in influencing rates of parent participation.[23]

In this study I suggest that black parents, along with many black Americans, harbor feelings of distrust and suspicion towards the school. In particular, they are fearful that educators discriminate, overtly and covertly, against black children. They are also disappointed by the lack of ritualistic celebration of black heroes and the relatively few black school teachers. Not all black parents in the study shared these feelings; some felt that relations were fine at the school. Nevertheless, black parents' concerns were found in upper middle class, working class, and lower class black families although, as I have shown, parents adopted very different strategies of interacting with school officials.

Moreover, I have shown that educators have defined a very narrow range of parent behaviors as legitimate and helpful. This historically arbitrary standard places a priority on parents taking on an educational role and monitoring and supervising children's school careers.[24] It also stresses the importance of parents being positive, supportive, and uncritical in their interactions with teachers. The broader context of race relations, and black parents' distrust and suspicion of racial inequity in schooling, make it more difficult for black parents to comply with this standard than white parents. Some black parents, particularly middle class black parents, do comply with teachers' definitions regarding helpful family roles

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[21] J.U. Ogbu, The Next Generation: An Ethnography of Education in an Urban Neighborhood (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

[22] D. Baker and D. Stevenson, "Mothers' Strategies for School Achievement: Managing the Transition to High School," Sociology of Education 59: 156-167; Lareau, [n. 2 above]; E. Useem, "Getting on the Fast Track in Mathematics: School Organizational Influences on Math Track Assignments," Sociology of Education (forthcoming).

[23] Useem [n. 22 above]; Epstein, [n. 10 above].

[24] Lareau, [n. 2 above]; J.L. Epstein, "Family Structures that Promote Student Motivation and Achievement: A Developmental Perspective," Research on Motivation in Education, Vol. 3, eds. C. Ames and R. Ames (Orlando: Academic Press, in press).

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(although they also may have unspoken criticisms of the school). Other black parents, fueled by their concerns regarding racial discrimination, are active in school but have difficult and unhappy relations with teachers.[25] While not all white parents have positive relationships with educators, white parents do not appear to approach their children's schooling with a concern that their children might be treated unfairly by teachers. Thus, although mediated by social class, race appears to have an important and independent influence on the constriction of parent-teacher relationships. This needs to be taken seriously by researchers.[26]

In addition, the results of the study have implications for the theoretical debates regarding the mechanisms for the reproduction of social inequality. As noted above, a key problem in studies of education is the failure to illuminate carefully the exact mechanisms through which parents do, and do not, transmit advantages to their children. Many researchers have been content to draw correlations between family background and educational outcomes, leaving the school as a black box.[27] Others provide a carefully drawn portrait of classroom interaction or school life, but have difficulty connecting patterns of behavior to the transmission of social inequality.[28]

By critically assessing the standards of institutions and then assessing the ways in which parents comply with these standards, researchers have the potential to build more sophisticated models of social reproduction. Notably, researchers may be able to isolate crucial moments in students' careers: "moments of reproduction" and "moments of social exclusion". Mrs. Erickson, for example, in rebuffing the requests by Faith's mother that her daughter be moved to a higher reading group, prevented the mother from gaining an educational advantage for her child. By contrast, Mrs. Daesch, a first grade teacher, had agreed to honor Mr.

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[25] I have restricted my discussion to parent and teacher relationships. It may be, of course, that parents' distrust of the school system is conveyed to their children and fosters an ambivalence in their children's attitudes towards school, particularly regarding the importance of obeying school authorities. My study cannot address this issue. For a discussion of black students' ambivalence towards education see: Ogbu, [n. 21 above]; and, R. Mickelson, "The Achievement-Attitude Paradox Among Black Adolescents," Sociology of Education 62,2 (1989).

[26] Research on parent involvement in education also is faulty when it is primarily oriented to measuring the amount of contact between parents and teachers and assumes that an increase in parent-teacher interaction is positive. According to this line of work, Faith Newman's parents would be classified more positively than other parents with less contact with the school. The quality of interaction and the amount of conflict between parents and teachers should be routinely considered in studies of parent involvement in education.

[27] A.V. Cicourel and H. Mehan, "Universal Development, Stratifying Practices, and Status Attainment," Research in Social Stratification and Mobility 4 (1985): 3-27.

[28] For a review, see H. Mehan, "Understanding Inequality in Schools: The Contribution of Interpretative Studies," Sociology of Education (in press).

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and Mrs. Irving's request that their daughter, Shandra, be admitted to the Academically Talented program. Similarly, Mrs. Nelson allowed Joe Hughes' mother to provide typed spelling lists with words spelled correctly and incorrectly. While other children in the class were required to write out the spelling word after it had been dictated, Joe Hughes was permitted simply to circle the properly spelled word on the list his mother had prepared. As a result of her intervention, Joe received a "C" in spelling. His teacher and his mother were convinced that without these special arrangements he would have failed. Through this form of parent involvement in schooling, there was a moment where the parents' class position was used to gain educational advantage or, put differently, a moment in the process of social reproduction.

Although one cannot know in advance how parents will act to shepherd students though an educational institution, researchers and educators do generally agree on some of the crucial moments in students' educational careers: assignment to math group in eighth grade, enrollment in college preparatory classes, enrollment to take the college admissions test, and entrance to college. Students must pass through "gates" to gain educational (and ultimately occupational) advantages.

Other moments of reproduction are not as easily predictable. They depend on the ability, motivation, and temperament of the child as well as the school environment in which the child operates. In some instances parents intensely work through a conflict their child had with a teacher. In other instances parents seek to "override" the placement decision of counselors for math courses in junior high school.[29] While the moments in which parents seek to intervene in schooling may vary widely, there are compelling signs that how parents manage these educational hurdles can have an impact on children's school success.[30] In addition, as I have shown, social class and race shapes the likelihood of parents intervening in schooling in ways teachers define as legitimate.

Thus, although studies using reproduction and resistance theories have made important contributions to our knowledge, they have not often been able to focus precisely on crucial moments in students' careers. Illuminating these moments is a more exacting task than simply portraying students' attitudes and behaviors towards school.[31] Nevertheless, developing increased sensitivity to these interactions is an

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[29] Useem, [n. 22 above].

[30] Epstein, [n. 24 above].

[31] Willis, [n. 2 above]; MacCloud, [n. 2 above].

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important key to the development of more accurate and sophisticated conceptual models.

In the end, researchers are well advised to recall that the advice professionals give to parents -- including advice regarding schooling -- changes regularly over time.[32] Professionals have changed their minds regarding the proper level of authority in childrearing, the level of rigidity and flexibility in childrearing, and the appropriate amount of intellectual stimulation parents should provide. In addition, within a given historical period, professionals disagree with one another. These historical shifts mean that the standards of dominant institutions are dynamic rather than static. In particular, the criteria for success within the organization is subject to change. Researchers who remain preoccupied with the standards of success in any given historical moment (e.g., scholars who ask if parents provide children with a computer) miss a broader and deeper question. They fail to ask, "How do parents keep abreast of the ever-changing standards of school?" Nor do they examine the questions: "How do social class and race influence parents' access to the ever-changing advice of professionals?" and, "How do social class and race influence the likelihood of parents believing the advice of professionals?" These questions are important in the study of social reproduction. Addressing these issues turns the focus away from the intrinsic benefit of particular socialization practices. Instead, research is directed to the standards professionals hold and the impact of social class on parents' adopting these standards. Since the standards of schools and professionals in schools have changed radically in the last century, while the general patterns of social inequality have not, illuminating these issues may be a crucial piece of knowledge as we continue to try to unravel the complex interweaving of social structure and biography in daily life.

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[32] U. Bronfenbrenner, "Socialization and Social Class though Time and Space," in Class, Status, and Power, eds. R. Bendix and S.M. Lipset (New York: The Free Press, 1966), pp. 362-377; and, J. Wrigley, "Do Young Children Need Intellectual Stimulation? Experts' Advice to Parents, 1900-1985," History of Education 29 (1989): 41-75.

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Table 1

The Distribution of Children in the Study by Race and Social Class

Social Class	White	Black	Total
Upper Middle Class	9	3	12
Working Class	3	4	7
Lower Class	0	5	5
Total:	12	12	24

*Upper middle class includes families where at least one parent has a college degree and is employed in a professional or managerial position.

*Working class families includes families where at least one parent has graduated from high school and is employed on a steady basis in a skilled or semi-skilled position. This category includes lower level white collar workers.

*Lower class families include families where parents are on welfare. Most of these parents are high school drop-outs or high school graduates.

White Male Working Class Youth:
An Exploration of Relative Privilege and Loss

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The 1970s and 1980s brought great change in the American class structure, change reflective of industrial reorganization and realignment since World War II. At the end of World War II, American corporations dominated world markets. The American steel industry, for example, was virtually the only major producer in the world. By the 1960s, Germany, Japan, France, Italy and Britain had rebuilt their steel industries, using the most advanced technology and had become highly competitive with American industry. By the 1970s, the American steel industry was in decline relative to other nations. This pattern, traced by Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, was repeated in a wide variety of industries, leading to large scale factory closings, and what has been heralded as "de-industrialization" and the "new economy".[1]

Accompanying de-industrialization in the 1970s was corporate restructuring -- a strategy born in response to the "productivity crisis", or what became known as the "competitiveness problem".[2] Companies became "lean and mean" with all excess fat, usually in the form of employees, trimmed. Thus, slimmed down core firms and the gutting of the industrial wage earning sector in the United States were the watchwords as America moved into the 1980s and 1990s.

These changes had large scale impact on the nature of available jobs. Industrial jobs and entry level jobs with core firms which noncollege bound students previously had entered were rapidly disappearing. Fortune 500 companies eliminated 3.1 million jobs between 1980 and 1987. Other analysts report that almost two million jobs were excised in manufacturing between 1979 and 1986, and 600,000 to 1.2 million middle and upper level executives lost jobs from 1983 to 1986. Indeed, the Department of Labor estimated that from 1980 through 1985, eleven million workers lost their jobs through plant closings and massive layoffs. Of these, fifty-five percent experienced downward mobility.[3]

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[1] B. Bluestone and B. Harrison, The De-Industrialization of America (New York: Basic Books, 1982).

[2] C. Axtell Ray and R. Mikelson, "Restructuring Students for Restructural Work: The Economy, School Reform, and Noncollege Bound Youth", mimeo, p. 8.

[3] Estimates are fairly consistent regarding the new economy. See D. Birch, "The Hidden Economy", Wall Street Journal, June 10, 1988, p. 23; R. Shapiro and M. Walsh, "The Great Jobs Mismatch", U.S. News and World Report, September 7,

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The question arises, given corporate restructuring and de-industrialization, what kinds of positions will be available in the future? While predictions of the quality of new jobs awaiting youth vary, it is generally agreed that there will be a disproportionate number of opportunities in low level positions relative to high level ones. Based on US Bureau of Labor Statistics data, estimates are that there will be between 500,000 to 700,000 new and replacement jobs between 1982 and 1995 for the following positions: computer systems analysts, computer programmers, and electrical engineers. In contrast, estimates suggest that there will be between ten and fifteen million new and replacement jobs in the three traditional occupations -- custodians, cashiers and salesclerks. This represents from sixteen to thirty-two times the number of openings for the three high level technical positions noted above. Job openings due to turnover, in particular, strongly favor the lowest paying occupations in the economy.[4] Michael Apple estimates that there will be more janitorial jobs -- 779,000 -- created between 1987 and 1995 than all the new computer service technicians and programmers, systems analysts, and computer operators combined.[5]

Until recently, the white male working class was relatively privileged in the economy in relation to African-American men and women, and white women. While certainly not privileged in comparison with middle class white men, labor union struggles have enabled many working class men to command good steady jobs with benefits in what Richard Edwards and other have called the subordinate primary market.[6] This market segment is differentiated from both the independent primary and secondary markets primarily by the presence of unions. It differs from the secondary market in that jobs in the secondary market, unlike those in the primary market, provide low pay, virtually no job security, and movement in and out of them is common. Most importantly, work in the secondary market is not regular, and intermittent unemployment and periods of pervasive wagelessness among individuals is widespread. The majority of African-American males and

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1987, pp. 42-43; and, S. Levitan and I. Shapiro, Working But Poor: America's Contradiction (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1987), as cited in Axtell and Mikelson (ibid.), p. 20.

[4]H.M. Levin and R. Rumberger, "Education Requirements for New Technologies: Visions, Possibilities and Current Realities", Educational Policy, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1987): 333-334.

[5]M. Apple, "American Realities: Poverty, Economy, and Education", in Dropouts from School: Issues, Dilemmas and Solutions, ed. by L. Weis, E. Farrar, and H. Petrie (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 205-225, as cited in Axtell and Mikelson (ibid.), p. 20.

[6] R. Edwards, The Contested Terrain (New York: Basic Books, 1979).

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females, as well as most white women are trapped in the secondary market sector.[7] Thus the position of white working class males was, until recently, relatively privileged, both by virtue of their "whiteness" and "maleness".[8]

This position of relative privilege has been eroded, however, with de-industrialization and the weakening of labor unions in the 1970s and 1980s.[9] What, then, is happening to the white male working class? This chapter explores the issue by drawing upon data collected as part of a larger ethnography of white working class youth in a high school located in a de-industrializing area in the northeastern United States. Given loss of relative privilege, what are the elements of experience and emerging voice among young white males? No longer able to count on the braiding of whiteness and maleness to secure privilege as they knew it, what, then, are the voices of young men as this particular class fraction heads into the 1990s? How is the experience and voice of relative privilege, born of the intersection of whiteness and maleness, likely to be rearticulated as that relative privilege is eroded by both the economy and the collective struggles of white women and men and women of color?

It is not my intention here to address this complex set of issues in full. That would not be possible in the space of one chapter. Rather, I will open up the discussion of white working class male voice in the context of the new economy by focusing on two areas which emerged as exceptionally significant in the ethnography: 1) white male home/family identity and masculinist expression and 2) expressed anger toward white women and men and women of color. As I will argue here, the two are linked. At the end of the chapter, I will turn my attention to the possibility of white male involvement with the secular New Right. My intent here is to examine the voices of what has been seen as an exploited group under capitalism and, at the same time, recognize that this group was a privileged one in relation to certain other groups. This "new" voice of the white working class male reflects both this loss of relative privilege as well as consciousness associated with the Traditional Proletariat.

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[7] This is not to deny that many women do not rely on their wages alone but are, rather, enmeshed within a domestic economy which includes their husband's wages. Many women are not helped by male wages, however, and the number of women also earning the sole family wage is rising.

[8] This is not to deny the exploitation of the working class in the service of capitalist profits, but to admit quite frankly that many are far worse off in the economy than white working class males.

[9] L. Weis, Working Class Without Work: High School Students in a De-Industrializing Economy (New York: Routledge and Chapman Hall, 1990); M. Davis, Prisoners of the American Dream (London: Verso Press, 1986).

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Freeway

Data presented here were gathered as part of an ethnographic investigation of Freeway High, I spent the academic year 1985-86 in the high school, acting as a participant observer for three days a week for an entire year. Data were gathered in classrooms, study halls, the cafeteria, extracurricular activities, and through in-depth interviews with over sixty juniors, virtually all the teachers of juniors, the vice-principals, social workers, guidance counselors and others. Data collection centered on the junior class, since this is a key point of decision when PSATs, SATs and so forth must be considered. In addition, this is the time when the bulk of a series of state tests must be taken if entrance to a four year college is being considered.

The move to post-industrial society is particularly evident in Freeway due to the closing of Freeway Steel. The plant payroll in 1969 was at a record high of $168 million, topping 1968 by $14 million. The average daily employment was 18,500. Production of basic oxygen furnace and open hearth was at a near record of 6,580,000 tons.

In the first seven months of 1971, layoffs at Freeway Steel numbered 4,000 and decline continued into the 1980s. From 18,500 jobs in 1979, there were only 3,700 production and 600 supervisory workers left in 1983 and 3,600 on layoff. At the end of 1983 the plant closed. All that remains of close to 20,000 workers are 370 bar mill workers.[10] A very high proportion of students at Freeway High had fathers, uncles and/or grandfathers who worked in the plant or in one of the adjacent service industries ("gin mills" abounded, for example). In addition, many of the male teachers worked in the plant either before becoming teachers or during summers when they were off from college, being steered into these summer jobs by fathers who worked there. The town was intricately woven within the fabric of the plant in a number of ways. White sons simply assumed that they would follow their fathers' footsteps into the plant -- into a possible grueling, but definitely well paying and stable job.

Examination of data gathered for the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area of which Freeway is a part (data for Freeway per se are not available) confirms a number of trends that are reflective of Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison's

[10] Freeway Evening News. Magazine Section, June 5, 1983.

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argument regarding de-industrialization. Occupational data for 1960 to 1980 (the most recent data available) suggest that the most striking decreases in the area are found in the categories of "Precision, Production Craft and Repair" and "Operators, Fabricators, and Laborers". These two categories constitute virtually all the so-called "blue collar" jobs. When combined, data suggest a relative decline of 22.3 percent in the "blue collar" category from 1960 to 1980. A look at some of the more detailed subcategories reveals a more striking decline. Manufacturers, for example, experienced an overall decline in the area of thirty-five percent between 1958 and 1982.[11]

Data also suggest an increase in the "Technical, Sales and Administrative Support" categories. These occupations constituted 22.8 percent of the total in 1960 as compared with close to thirty-one percent in 1980, representing an increase of over one-third. Increases in "Service" and "Managerial and Professional Specialty" categories also reflect a shift away from industry and toward the availability of service occupations.[12]

The change in the distribution of occupations by gender needs to be clarified here as well. During this same time period, female employment increased fifty-five percent, while employment for men decreased six percent. For most occupations, a net increase in employment during this period may be attributed mainly to the increase in employed women and a net decrease to a decrease in employed men.

Although the emerging economy has absorbed women at a faster rate than men, the proportion of full-time female workers is still lower than that of full-time male workers. Sixty-seven percent of male workers worked full-time in 1980 as compared with only forty-three percent of females. In addition, full-time female workers earned fifty-six percent of what full-time male workers earned in 1980. Women in Sales have average incomes that are only forty-six percent of the average income for men.[13] This is particularly important given that a growing number of positions in the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area are in Sales, and that these are filled disproportionately by women. Such trends are reflective of trends nationwide. Thus, the move toward post-industrial society has meant that a higher proportion of females is employed in the labor force relative to earlier years, but

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[11] Data are reported in full in Lois Weis, Working Class Without Work: High School Students in a De-Industrializing Society (New York: Routledge, 1990).

[12] Ibid. Occupations by year for Freeway Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA), all persons.

[13] Ibid. These figures are based on the same SMSA data as noted above.

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that females increasingly earn relatively lower wages than males. It also means, however, that many more men are earning far less money than they used to.

I will argue here that the desire for male dominant families and expressed anger toward white women as well as men and women of color are linked to these economic realities. While both were certainly embedded historically within white working class male culture, it is the loss of relative privilege under the new economy, coupled with these historically embedded sentiments, that currently fuels the white working class. Also, the New Right, a broader social movement, has provided a way of politicizing and consolidating these sentiments, thus lending them legitimacy within a larger sense.

Desire for Male Dominant Families

Previous investigators of the white working class have noted the sexism embedded within the identity of this class fraction. Paul Willis, J.C. Walker and R.W. Connell have argued extensively that male white working class identity is constructed partially in relation to that of the ideologically constructed identity of females.[14] For example, mental labor is not only less valued than manual labor, it is less valued because it is seen as feminine. This encourages certain types of gender relations in the sense of separate spheres for males and females, the male sphere being superior. The "lads", for example, impose upon girlfriends an ideology of domesticity, "the patterns of homely and subcultural capacity and incapacity, all of which stress the restricted role of women.[15] The very form of the cultural affirmation of the male self and the particular form of the constructed female other affirm a certain form of male dominance, albeit coded in class terms.

In terms of male superiority, Freeway males exhibit the same virulent sexism uncovered in previous studies. This is particularly striking in light of the emerging identity of females. One or two boys exist somewhat outside these boundaries, but basically white working class males affirm a rather virulent form of assumed male superiority which involves the constructed identity of the female not

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[14] P. Willis, Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs (Westmead, England: Saxon House Press, 1977); J.C. Walker, Louts and Legends: Male Youth Culture in an Inner City School (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1988); R.W. Connell, "Live Fast and Die Young: The Construction of Masculinity among Youth Working Class Men on the Margin of the Labor Market", 1990 (mimeo).

[15] Willis, p. 49.

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only as "other", but also as less than and, therefore, subject to male control. Discussions with males indicate that the vast majority speak of future wives and families in highly controlling and male dominant terms. This contrasts sharply with the sentiments of females, a point to which I will return later.

LW: You say you want more kids than your parents have. How many kids do you want?

Bob: Five.

LW: Who's going to take care of these kids?

Bob: My wife, hopefully. Unless she's working, too (...) If she wants to work, we'd figure something out. Day-care center, something like that. I'd prefer if she didn't want to. I'd like to have her at home.

*****

LW: How about your life ten years from now; what do you think you'll be doing?

Rob: Probably be married. Couple of kids (...)

LW: (...)Do you think your wife will work?

Rob: Hopefully she won't have to, 'cause I'll make enough money.

LW: Would you rather she didn't work?

Rob: Naw [Yes, I'd rather she didn't work].

LW: Women shouldn't work?

Rob: Housework.

*****

Jim: Yes, I'd like to get married, like to get myself a nice house, with kids.

LW: (...)Who is going to be taking care of those kids?

Jim: Depends how rich I am. If I'm making a good salary, I assume that the wife, if she wanted to, would stay home and tend to the kids. If there was ever a chance when she wanted to go someplace, fine, I'd watch the kids. Nothing wrong with that. Equal responsibility because when you were consummating the marriage it was equal responsibility.

LW: So, you're willing to assume it?

Jim: Up to a certain point...Like if she says I'm going to go out and get a job and you take care of the kids, "You draw all day" [he wants to be a commercial artist]. "So, I draw; that's what's been supporting us for so many years." I mean, if she starts dictating to me (...), there has to be a good discussion about the responsibilities.

(...)When both parents work, it's been proven that the amount of education they learn, it goes down the tubes, or they get involved in drugs. Half the kids who have drug problems, both of their parents work. If they are doing terribly in school, their parents work.

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LW: When you get married, what will your wife be doing?

Lanny: Well, before we had any kids, she'd be working; but if we had kids, she wouldn't work; she'd be staying home, taking care of the kids.

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Seth: I wouldn't mind my wife working as far as secretarial work or something like that. Whatever she wanted to do and she pursued as a career. if there was children around, I'd like her to be at home, so I'd like my job to compensate for just me working and my wife being at home.

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LW: Do you think your wife would want to work?

Sam: I wouldn't want her to work.

*****

LW: Let's say you did get married and have children, and your wife wanted to work.

Bill: It all depends on if I had a good job. If the financial situation is bad and she had to go to work, [then] she had to go to work.

LW: And if you got a good job?

Bill: She'd probably be a regular woman.

LW: Staying at home? Why is that a good thing?

Bill: I don't know if it's a good thing, but it'd probably be the normal thing.

Without question, most of the boys are envisioning family life in highly male dominant terms. They see the possibility that their wives might work, but only out of "necessity", or, more likely, before children are born. They wish to see their own income sufficient to "support" a family; they expect to earn the "family wage", thus enabling their wives to assume the "normal" role of taking care of the home and children. Male students state that they would "help when they could", but they see children as basically the woman's responsibility, and they intend for their wives to be at home in a "regular" womanly fashion.

Only a handful of boys constructed a future other than that above. Significantly, only one boy constructed a future in which his wife **should** work, although he does not talk about children. A few boys reflect the sentiment that marriage is a "ball and chain", and one boy said the high divorce rate makes marriage less than attractive. Both of the latter themes are elaborated by the girls.

LW: What kind of person do you want to marry?

Vern: Someone who is fairly good-looking, but not too good looking so she'd be out, with other people screwing her up. Someone who don't mind what I'm doing, let

me go out with the guys. I won't mind if she goes out with the girls either. I want her to have a job so she ain't home all the time. 'Cause a woman goes bonkers if she's at home all day. Give her a job and let her get out of the house.

(...)People tended to get married as soon as they got out of school, not as soon as, but a couple of years after. I think people nowadays don't want to get married until twenty, thirty.

LW: And that's because of what?

Vern: They've seen too many divorces.

It is noteworthy that Vern is the only boy to discuss divorce as an impediment to marriage. Almost every girl interviewed discusses divorce, and it is a topic of conversation within all female groupings. Despite Vern's relatively more open-minded attitude toward females, it is significant that he still envisions himself "allowing" his wife to work, and sees his role as one of controlling her time and space. He does not, for example, want her to be "too good-looking" because then she would be out, with "other people screwing her up". He also notes that he "does not mind" her going "out with the girls" and that he wants "her to have a job so she ain't home all the time". He therefore see himself **giving permission** to his wife to have certain freedoms.

The boy below expresses the sentiment that marriage is a "ball and chain", and that he wants no part of it. Only a couple of boys expressed a similar sentiment or elaborated the theme of "freedom" associated with being single. Again, this is unlike the girls.

Tom: I don't want to get married; I don't want to have children. I want to be pretty much free. If I settle down with someone, it won't be through marriage.

LW: Why not?

Tom: Marriage is a ball and chain. The marital problems come up, financial problems, whatever. I don't really want to get involved in the intense kind of

problems between you and a spouse. (...)To me it's a joke.

LW: Tell me why you think that.

Tom: Well, I see a lot of people. I look at my father and mother. They don't get along, really.

The vast majority of boys at Freeway High intend to set up homes in which they exert control over their wives, in which they go out to work and their wives stay at home. Only a few question the institution of marriage, and only one begins to question fundamental premises of patriarchy, that a woman's place is in the home and a man's place is in the public sphere. As noted above, even this one boy sees himself controlling the actions of his wife. The white male voice, then, embodies a strong desire for male dominance in the home/family sphere as well as in the paid labor force. The assumption of privilege vis-á-vis women in the family comes through loud and clear.

Male supremacy as a key element of identity is born out by classroom observations where boys state positions similar to those above. Girls, although they challenge this position rather seriously on one level, do not tend to speak out against the boys in class, leaving the male voice a privileged one in the public arena. When the male vision is challenged, it is done so by male teachers, although not always for the most progressive of reasons. Overall, there is a privileging of the young white male voice in the school -- it tends not to be interrupted. Teachers do, at times, make an attempt to interrupt this voice, but this interruption is not sustained, and certainly not successful, as the following observations suggest:

Social Studies, December 3, 1985

Mr. ___: Why should women be educated? (A lot of chatter; many males saying they shouldn't be, or perhaps that they should be for secretarial science.)

Mr. ___: Look, you [the women] are better equipped to teach the children; you are better able to communicate with your husband if you are an educated woman. Also, today not everybody gets married. The better the education, the better the opportunity for a good job for both men and women.

Mr. ___: Women today probably need education more, because today in broken marriages and divorces, the women normally have the children.

Ben: But men have to pay child support -- a hundred dollars a week...

Mr. ___: Hey, you talk to many women, they don't get a penny from their former husbands. What about the guy who just got laid off from the steel plant -- how are you going to pay a hundred dollars a week?

Ben talked to Mr. ___ after class and said his dad sends one hundred and twenty dollars a week for child support. Mr. ___ says, "Great, but isn't it true that your mom has to wait for checks; sometimes some bounce; so isn't it better that she has her own job?" Ben says [rather sheepishly], "She works, too."

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Social Studies, December 4, 1985

Mr. ___: We were talking yesterday about whether it was a waste of time to educate women and we concluded that it wasn't. I concluded that it wasn't, and you agree if you want to get the right mark.

Jim: Who asked you?

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Social Studies, December 12, 1985

Mr. ___ goes over the multiple-choice questions and asks students to answer.

Mr. ___: Question: Women are basically unwilling to assume positions in the business world. Agree or disagree?

Sam: Agree.

Mr. ___: Why?

Sam: Because women want to raise children and get married.

Mr. ___: All women?

Sam: No, but most.

Mr. ___: Anyone disagree?

No disagreement.

No doubt the "correct" answer to the question was "disagree", but there was no further discussion of the matter.

The point, again, is that males envision a future in which they inhabit the public sphere and women the private. Men also expect to exert control over their wives in the private sphere. They intend to earn the "family wage", in return for which women will listen to them and take care of the home and children. Although, as I suggest below, females challenge this in their own envisioned future, they tend not to challenge it directly in the classroom. The affirmation of male superiority and envisioned control over women within white male working class youth identity remains, therefore, largely uninterrupted in the public arena of the school.

The male voice regarding women contrasts sharply with that of the young women's own voice. Previous studies suggest that working class high school females elaborate, at the level of their own identity, a private/public dichotomy that emphasizes the centrality of the private and marginalizes the public. During adolescence, home/family life assumes a central position for girls, and wage labor a secondary position. As many studies have shown, working class girls elaborate what Angela McRobbie calls an "ideology of romance", constructing a gender identity that serves, ultimately, to encourage women's second class status in both the home and workplace. Studies of McRobbie and Linda Valli, in particular, have been important in terms of our understanding of the way in which these processes work upon and through the identity of young women.[16]

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[16] A. McRobbie, "Working Class Girls and the Culture of Femininity", Women Take Issue, Women Studies Group (London: Hutchinson, 1978); L. Valli, Becoming Clerical Workers (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986). It must be pointed out here that while this "ideology of romance" may be constructed with the hope of moving out of an oppressive home of origin and not, therefore, necessarily as "homebound" as has been seen by some investigators, it does, nevertheless, still tie women to the home of their future husband in much the same way as their mothers were tied. It is not, then, necessarily a celebration of their own home of origin but may, rather, reflect a generally ill-founded hope that their future home will be different (less oppressive) from that in which they grew up. Thus, the identity uncovered by previous investigators is, indeed, homebound but may not reflect any particular attachment to the home of their father.

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This gender identity has serious implications for the position of women in both the family and the workplace in the sense that it represents parameters within which struggles will take place. By defining domestic labor as primary, women reinforce what can be called the Domestic Code, under which home or family becomes defined as women's place and the public sphere of power and work as men's place. The reality, of course, is that generations of working class women have labored in the public sphere, and that labor also takes place in the home, albeit unpaid. Yet, as Karen Brodkin Sacks points out:

> The Domestic Code has been a ruling set of concepts in that it did not have to do consistent battle with counterconcepts. It has also been a ruling concept in the sense that it explained an unbroken agreement among capitalists, public policymakers and later much of organized labor, that adequate pay for women was roughly 60 percent of what was adequate for men and need be nowhere near adequate to allow a woman to support a family or herself.[17]

Basically, the domestic code is articulated **for** women **by** men and there is a certain privileging of this voice in the school. That is the code under which young white men of this class fraction would like their future wives to operate, placing themselves, as mates, the dominant head of family. Rather than struggle for any form of egalitarian relations between men and women, Freeway males are very clear that they would like male dominant families under which women basically do as they are told.[18]

The most striking point about female identity in Freeway is that, unlike the case of other somewhat older ethnographies of white working class girls, there is little evidence of a marginalized wage labor identity which would sustain the domestic code envisioned by males. The young women have, in fact, made the obtaining of wage labor a primary rather than secondary goal. Almost without exception, the girls desire to continue their education, and they are clear that they intend to do so in order to get their own lives in order. It is worth noting that this

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[17] K. Brodkin Sacks, ed., My Troubles are Going to Have Trouble With Me (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), pp. 17-18. See also A. Kessler-Harris, "Where Are the Organized Women Workers?" in Feminist Studies 3, 1-2: 92-110, as cited in Sacks, p. 18.

[18] Willis has suggested the possibility of white working class men striving for more egalitarian gender relations. Unfortunately, I could not disagree more. See P. Willis, "Youth Unemployment: Thinking The Unthinkable," (mimeo).

is reminiscent of the voices of African-American and African-Caribbean females in studies of romance, marriage and the future.[19]

In addition to stressing a wage labor identity rather than a marginalizing one, young Freeway women downplay a home/family identity. Although some assert that they wish to have some form of home/family identity, it is never asserted first, and generally only as a possibility "later on" when their own job or career is "settled". Some of the girls reject totally the possibility of marriage and children; many others wish to wait "until I am at least thirty", which is, to teenagers, a lifetime away. The primary point, however, is that they assert strongly that they must settle themselves first (go to school, get a job) before entering into family responsibilities; in other words, the construction of home/family identity is secondary, rather than primary.

It is not my intention here to elaborate on female identity and the possible reasons why it takes the shape and form that it does. It is, however, pertinent to this discussion in the sense that it sharply contradicts that developed for women by men. Males hope to establish male dominant households -- females intend to get on with their lives in, at least for the moment, rather individualistic terms, concentrating on establishing themselves in the public rather than the private sphere. They intend to do this as a hedge against the very male dominant homes Freeway boys wish to construct for themselves. As I will suggest below, this tension over the form of envisioned family life represents only a piece of a broader struggle related to the very definition of masculinity in this class fraction as a restructured economy takes hold. It is to this issued that I now turn.

Forms of Expressed Masculinity

The male wage has been seen as the key to understanding the establishment of patriarchal homes in working class culture and as the key to male identity in general. As Paul Willis argues:

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[19] See, for example, B. Bryan, S. Dadzie, and S. Sharfe, The Heart of the Race (London: Virago, 1985); and, L. Weis, "Without Dependence on Welfare for Life: The Experience of Black Women in the Urban Community College", The Urban Review 7, 4 (1985): 233-56.

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> Most importantly, perhaps, the (male) wage is still the golden key (mortgage, rent, household bills) to a personal household separate from parents and separate from work, from production. The home is the main living embodiment of the laborer's freedom and independence from capital - apart from wage labor, of course, which is the price for the independence of a separate home. But this price really does purchase something. The something is an area of privacy, security and protection from the aggression and exploitation of work, from the patriarchal dependencies of the parental home, from other vicissitudes of the work place. The separate home is still a universal working class objective and its promise of warmth and safety more than offsets the risk and coldness of work.[20]

Willis and others suggest that a "sense of being a man" acts as a hedge against the conventional order of class and status. The toughness and strength required to do working class jobs both obscure economic exploitation and can be the basis for some dignity and collective identity -- a sense of pride in being able to do what middle class "cissy" men cannot. Thus masculinist expression vis-á-vis the heaviness, difficulty and dirtiness associated with traditional working class jobs acts to value this form of labor above "paper pushing" work. Certain collectivist forms of masculinist expression grew up around working class jobs and are embedded within the consciousness of male working class culture.

Ray Raphael extends our understanding of the social construction of masculinity by noting that the manliness of manual labor can appear very attractive, particularly during adolescence, when masculinity and physicality are most closely linked in the male mind. In contrast, the absence of such labor can be experienced as a threat to constructed masculinity. These points emerge in the interview with Jimmy S. in Raphael's study:

> When I was sixteen, seventeen years old, I used to help out my dad in his men's clothing store. That was always an option for me, to go into the family business. There was money in it, at least some money, a successful business, but it had absolutely zero appeal.

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[20] Willis (n. 18 above), p. 8.

> Part of the problem was style. I preferred jeans and sneakers, clothes that let you feel your own body. His customers all wore ties and jackets and pressed slacks and leather shoes with slick soles. To me, dressing like that was pointless. The shoes slipped on the ice or you fell in the mud. The jacket and slacks ripped when you bent down to pick something up. The tie flapped in your face when you ran or it got caught in the gears of some machine and choked you to death. The whole outfit functioned like some sort of strait jacket which was purposely designed to prevent any sort of physical activity. My dad's customers looked encased inside their own clothes. Emasculated, I wanted no part of it. I wanted to be out there in the world, active and alive and doing really physical things.
>
> I did alot of gazing out the window when I worked there, out through those sterilized mannequins he had on display to the brazen workmen who were always digging up the street. That was a whole other world: jackhammers, wheelbarrows, overalls, unshaven faces, sweat, muscles. It was definitely more manly. At that point in my life I would've easily chosen to wield a jackhammer rather than just stand around and wait on my dad's dandy customers.[21]

That this is associated with masculinist expression and not simply a class expression per se is highlighted by the fact that there is no equivalent romanticization of physicality within working class female culture. As Allison Jones reminds us, physical labor for working class women is seen as sheer drudgery -- there is no point of romance with heavy and dirty jobs such as doing laundry, working in factories and so forth, among women as there is among men.[22]

It can be argued, therefore, that a restructured economy, in which there is no longer a reliance upon traditional proletarian labor to the same extent, signals a crisis in gender identity for the white working class male as much as it signals a lower standard of living. Forms of masculinist expression traditionally associated

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[21] R. Raphael, The Men From the Boys (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1988), p. 157. For another interesting view of the production of masculinity, see D. Gilmore, Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

[22] A. Jones, "'I Just Wanna Decent Job' Working Class Girls Education: Perspective and Policy Issues", Toward Successful Schooling, ed. by H. Lauder and C. Wylie (London: Falmer Press, 1990).

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with the white working class are simply outmoded by a restructured economy. Pushing buttons or waiting on tables is not the same as wielding a jack hammer or heavy machinery in a steel plant. It is unlikely that a cult of manliness will envelop the service sector, particularly since both men and women occupy this sector. Also, since male identity is tied to supporting a family, the lower wages available to working class men in addition to forms of masculine expression appropriate for available jobs will, by necessity, interact to encourage the production a new male -- a form of masculinist expression greatly at odds with that embedded within collectively based working class male culture.

Where does this crisis in gender identity leave the white working class male? As R.W. Connell and his associates remind us, there is no unitary form of masculine expression. There are competing forms of masculinity and the white working class must forge a new form in light of the phasing out of the old industrial order.[23] Economic restructuring really does signal a crisis in gender identity for the white working class male as much as it signals a lower standard of living.

The male dominant attitudes of the young men expressed in the previous section may be partially understood in these terms. It is arguably the case that they are asserting aggressively a resolution to this crisis by attempting to privilege themselves in the family, regardless of the changes around them. Interestingly enough, their comments center on a home/family identity rather than on a workplace identity as was formerly the case.[24] They are asserting the right to male dominant homes **in spite of the economy** -- in spite of the phasing out of the old industrial order and their formerly privileged place within it. Interestingly enough, of course, as young men center their identity struggle on the home and family, young women are centering their identity struggle on the workplace. The young women talk about their place in the workforce and do not focus on the home. Young men, in contrast, talk about their place in the male dominant home and do not discuss at any length their envisioned place in the workforce. This reversal of sense of self in the home/family and public sphere can be seen as a struggle over gender forms and as a male assertion that they **will** still be in charge. The assertion

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[23] Connell, et. al. (n. 14 above).

[24] Based on a survey conducted in 1956, for example, Elizabeth Douvan and Joseph Adelson concluded that girls are much less clear about their future work than boys, and that adolescent females focus on marriage and motherhood as a life plan rather than the world of work. More recent studies such as those by Valli and McRobbie, reach largely similar conclusions. See Valli and McRobbie [n. 16 above] and E. Douvan and J. Adelson, The Adolescent Experience (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966).

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of a more direct form of domination over women, in other words, domination not necessarily mediated through its cloak of labor dignity, contradicts young women's assertions that they wish to have more say over their own lives than their mothers and grandmothers had. A restructured economy is forcing the issue of gender definition in this class fraction. Young men are blurting out, "Dare anyone say I am not a man?", and are attempting to work through this crisis in gender identity by establishing direct domination over women in the home. Data from the ethnography in Freeway suggest that women are likely to challenge this.

Anger

This crisis in gender identity, accompanied by the very real fact that the form of schooling offered these young men will not enable the vast majority of them to break into anything other than the contingent economy, leaves them quite bitter. This is coupled with perceptions that affirmative action has privileged white women and African-American men and women, and that their own devalued position can be explained, therefore, not only by Japanese cars, but by laws which privilege others in what few good stable positions are left. The anger seeps out in a variety of ways. As one student said to me in the middle of class, "If my mom ever tells me what to do, I'll punch her in the face, like this" (slams one hand against the palm of the other, extremely brutally).

This anger comes out most clearly with reference to people of color. While there has certainly always been racism in this class fraction, in part because capital used minority labor to break strikes, the anger expressed among young people in this study is particularly intense.

Freeway is a divided town, even though it is small. African-Americans and a small number of Arabs and Hispanics live largely on one side of the "tracks", and whites live on the other, although there are whites living in a section of the predominantly minority side. Virtually no people of color live in the white area, which is not true of larger American cities where one finds areas of considerable mix. Most of the African-Americans live in a large public housing project, located near the old steel plant. Most project residents receive welfare and have done so for a number of years. Much of the expressed racism plays itself out around "access" to females, and, to some extent, drug use, as the examples below suggest.

Jim: The minorities are really bad into drugs. You're talking everything. Anything you want, you get from them. A prime example, the ___ ward of Freeway; about twenty years ago the ___ ward was predominantly white, my grandfather used to live there. Then Italians, Polish, the Irish people, everything was fine. The houses were maintained; there was a good standard of living (...)

(...)The blacks brought drugs. I'm not saying white people didn't have drugs; they had drugs, but to a certain extent. But drugs were like a social thing. But now you go down to the ___ ward; it's amazing; it's a ghetto. Some of the houses are okay. They try to keep them up. Most of the homes are really, really terrible. They throw garbage on the front lawn; it's sickening. You talk to people in [surrounding suburbs]. Anywhere you talk to people, they tend to think the majority of our school is black. They think you hang with black people, listen to black music.

(...)A few of them [blacks] are starting to go into the ___ ward now [the white side], so they're moving around. My parents will be around there when that happens, but I'd like to be out of there.

*****

LW: There's no fighting and stuff here [school], is there?

Clint: Yeah, a lot between blacks and whites.

LW: Who starts them?

Clint: Blacks.

LW: Do blacks and whites hang out in the same place?

Clint: Some do; [the blacks] live on the other side of town. (...)A lot of it [fights] start with blacks messing with white girls. That's how a lot of them start. Even if they [white guys] don't know the white girl, they don't like to see...

LW: How do you feel about that yourself?

Clint: I don't like it. If I catch them [blacks] near my sister, they'll get it. I don't like to see it like that. Most of them [my friends] see it that way [the same way he does].

LW: Do you think the girls encourage the attention of these black guys?

Clint: Naw. I think the blacks just make themselves at home. They welcome themselves in.

LW: How about the other way around? White guys with black girls?

Clint: There's a few that do. There's people that I know of, but no one I hang around with. I don't know many white kids that date black girls.

*****

Bill: Like my brother, he's in ninth grade. He's in trouble all the time. Last year he got jumped in school... About his girlfriend. He don't like blacks. They come up to her and go, "Nice ass", and all that shit. My brother don't like that when they call her "nice ass" and stuff like that. He got suspended for saying "fucking nigger"; but it's all right for a black guy to go up to whites and say stuff like that ["nice ass"].

(...)Sometimes the principals aren't doing their job. Like when my brother told [the assistant principal] that something is going to happen. Mr. ___ just said, "Leave it alone, just turn your head."

(...)Like they [administrators] don't know when fights start in this school. Like there's this one guy's kid sister, a nigger [correction] -- a black guy -- grabbed her ass. He hit him a couple of times. Did the principal know about it? No!

LW: What if a white guy did that [grabbed the girl's ass]?

Bill: He'd probably have punched him. But a lot of it's 'cause they're black.

Racial tension does exist within the school, and it reflects tension within the community and the society as a whole. It is clear that white boys attribute much of it to African-Americans hustling white girls. This is the male perception, but I heard no such comment from any female in the school. White males view white females as **their** property and resent African-American males speaking to them in, at times, crude terms. However, it must be noted that white boys themselves might say "nice ass" to white girls, and so forth. It is the fact that **black males** do it, and not that males do it, that is **most** offensive to white males. I never saw a white male go to the defense of a white female if she were being harassed by another white male. It is only when the male is black that their apparently protectionist tendencies surface, indicating a deep racism which comes out over girls, in particular. White girls are considered "property" by white boys, as the above section suggests, and they resent black intrusion onto **their** property. White males are intending to earn the "family wage", thus enabling them to establish male dominant homes. This gives them, in their estimation, certain **rights** to white females, rights that black males do not have. Not one girl voiced a complaint in this area. This is not to say that females are not racist, but that it is not a central element of their identity in the same way as it is for boys at this age.

Observational data support the notion of racism among white youth. This is mainly directed toward African-Americans, although, as the excerpts below indicate, racism surfaces with respect to Arabs as well. There is a small population of Yemenites who immigrated to Freeway to work in the mills, and it is this group that also is targeted to some extent.

Social Studies, November 26, 1986

Sam: Hey, Abdul, did you come from Arabia?

Abdul: Yeah.

Sam: How did you get here?

Abdul: I walked.

Sam: No, seriously, how'd you get here?

Abdul: Boat.

Sam: Where'd you come from?

Abdul: Saudi Arabia.

Sam: We don't want you. Why don't you go back.

[no comment]

Terry: What city did you come from?

Abdul: Yemen, if you ever heard of it.

*****

Social Studies, December 11, 1986

Ed: Do you party, Nabil?

Nabil: Yeah.

Paul: Nabil, the only thing you know how to play is polo on camels.

[Nabil ignores]

English, October 2, 1986

LW: [To Terry, who was hit by a car two days ago.] How are you?

Terry: Look at me [sic] face. Ain't it cool? [He was all scraped up.]

LW: What happened?

Terry: Some stupid camel jockey ran me over in a big white car. Arabian dude.

Most of the virulent racism is directed toward African-Americans, however. The word "nigger" flows freely from the lips of white males and they treat African-

American females in the same way, if not worse, than they say African-Americans treat white females.

At the lunch table, February 21, 1986
[Discussion with Craig Centrie, research assistant]

Pete: Why is it [your leather bag] so big?

Mike: So he can carry lots of stuff.

CC: I bought it because my passport would fit in it.

Pete: Passport; wow -- where are you from?

CC: Well I'm American now, but you need one to travel.

Pete: Can I see it? (he pulls out his passport; everyone looks)

Mike: This is my first time to ever see one. What are all those stamps?

CC: Those are admissions stamps so [you] can get in and out of countries.

Mike: Look Pete. N_I_G_E_R_I_A [pronounced Niggeria]. Yolanda [an African-American female] should go there [everyone laughs].

*****

In the lunchroom, January 21, 1986

Students [all white males at the table] joke about cafeteria food. They then begin to talk about Martin Luther King Day.

Dave: I have a wet dream -- about little white boys and little black girls. [laughter]

*****

In the lunchroom, March 7, 1986

Once again, at lunch, everyone complains about the food. Vern asked about a party he had heard about. Everyone knew about it, but it wasn't clear where it would be. A kid walked past the table [of white boys].

Clint: That's the motherfucker. I'll whop his ass. [The entire table goes "ou' ou' ou'".]

CC: What happened with those tickets, Pete? [Some dance tickets had been stolen.]

Pete: Nothing, but I'm pissed off at that nigger that blamed me.

Pete forgot how loud he was speaking and looked toward Yolanda [a black female] to see if she reacted. But she hadn't heard the remark.

*****

At the lunch table, February 12, 1986

Mike: That nigger makes me sick.

Pete: Who?

Mike: You know, Yolanda.

Pete: She's just right for you, man.

Mike: Not me, maybe Clint.

*****

At the lunch table, February 12, 1986

About two minutes later, Darcy [a black female] calls me [CC] over.

Darcy: What's your name?

CC: Craig, what's yours?

Darcy: It's Darcy. Clint told me a lie. He said your name was Joe. Why don't you come to a party at Yolanda's house tonight?

Yolanda: Why don't you just tell him you want him to come. [Everyone laughs.]

Clint: Well, all right, they want you!

Pete: What do you think of Yolanda?

CC: She's a nice girl. What do you think?

Pete: She's a stuck-up nigger. Be sure to write that down.

*****

[A group of males talk about themselves.] "We like to party all the time and get high!" [They call themselves "freaks" and "heads".] [about blacks] "They are a group unto themselves. They are all bullshitters."

*****

At the lunch table, February 12, 1986

Much of the time, students discussed the food. Vern talked about the Valentine's Day dance and began discussing getting stoned before the dance.

CC: Do you guys drink at the dance, too?

Pete: No, I don't know what they would do to us [everyone laughs]. There probably wouldn't be any more dances.

Yolanda and friends walked in. Yolanda and a friend were wearing exactly the same outfit.

Clint: What are you two, the fucking Gold Dust Twins?

Yolanda: Shut the fuck up 'boy' [everyone laughs].

Pete: (quietly) Craig, they are nasty.

CC: What do you mean?

Pete: You don't understand black people. They're yeach. They smell funny and they [got] hair under their arms.

Clint, Pete, Mike, and Jack all make noises to denote disgust.

The males spend a great deal of time exhibiting disgust for racial minorities, and, at the same time, asserting a protective stance over white females vis-á-vis African-American males. They differentiate themselves from African-American males and females in different ways, however. African-American males are seen as over-sexed and intruding onto their property (white women). African-American females, on the other hand, are treated as dirty and with simple disgust. Both are seen and interacted with largely in the sexual realm, however. The anger toward racial minorities comes through loud and clear.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored two areas of identity and voice among white working class males. The particular curriculum to which these students are being exposed almost certainly guarantees that the vast majority of them will end up in the contingent workforce, without security or benefits.[25] In addition, they will suffer a wage loss relative to that which their fathers were able to command in the industrial economy. Indeed, recent data released by the Economic Policy Institute suggest that most American families are having to work longer hours or have more family members work in the wage earning sector of the economy just to keep family incomes from falling precipitously.[26] Declines associated with the state of working America, according to this report, are most keenly felt by young workers, ages twenty-five to thirty-four, particularly those without college degrees. The young

[25] For an extensive analysis of the teaching offered these students, see L. Weis, [n. 9 above].

[26] L. Miskel and D.M. Frankel, The State of Working America (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 1990).

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men in the study have, in fact, been the ones most devastated economically by the structural realignment of the economy.

Given the almost certain place of these young men in the contingent workforce, coupled with their attempt to resolve the masculinity crisis by establishing direct domination over women in the home, there is a distinct possibility that these men will, in the future, closely articulate with the secular New Right. It is likely that the New Right will be able to rearticulate smoothly the pro-family rhetoric and racism expressed in the voices of the young men examined here.

Linda Gordan and Allen Hunter argue, for example, that anti-feminism (read: assertion of male dominance) is now propelling a strong and growing New Right, a development which is not only a backlash against women's and gay liberation movements, "but also a reassertion of patriarchal forms of family structure and male dominance".[27] Gordan and Hunter do not claim that the other issues have gone away. "Racism has not diminished as a political force, but it has been joined -- and the whole right wing thereby strengthened -- by a series of conservative campaigns defending the family, a restrictive and hypocritical sexual morality, and male dominance."[28] It is possible to interpret even the campaign against school bussing -- a racist issue -- as primarily an issue of the family. The loss of neighborhood schools is perceived as a threat to community, and therefore family stability -- fears for children's safety and objections to the inaccessibility of their schools and teachers reflect both family love and parental desire for control.[29] Andrew Koplind argues that what is new about the New Right is its concentration on "pro-family issues, and those who find that homosexuals, abortionists and liberated women, make perfect targets of convenience for baffled and misled traditionalists."[30]

That the New Right will be able to consolidate the angry racism of Freeway males is highly likely as well. Michael Omi and Howard Winant have argued persuasively that while the agenda of the far right in America and racial supremacist groups will not attract a mass base, the New Right may very well be able to do so.

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[27] L. Gordan and A. Hunter, Radical America (November 1977-February 1978): 9-25, as cited in D. Edgar, "Reagan's Hidden Agenda: Racism and the New Right", Race and Class XXII, 3 (1981): 225.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid. See also Allen Hunter's further analyses of these issues in "Children in the Service of Conservation: Parent-Child Relations in the New Right's Pro-Family Rhetoric", Institute for Legal Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1988.

[30] A. Koplind, New Times (September 30, 1977), pp. 21-33, as cited in Edgar [n. 27 above], p. 225.

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> The new right cannot simply defend patterns of racial inequality by demanding a return to segregation, for example, or by reviving simplistic notions of biological superiority/inferiority. As we have previously noted, the racial upheavals of the 1960s precluded a direct return to this form of racial logic. The new right objective, however, was to dismantle the political gains of racial minorities. Since these gains could not be reversed, they had to be **rearticulated.** The key device used by the new right in its effort to limit the political gains of racial minority movements has been "code words". These are phrases and symbols which refer to racial theories, but do not directly challenge popular democratic or egalitarian ideals (e.g., justice, equal opportunity).[31]

Omi and Winant suggest that the New Right is a powerful social movement that does not generally display overt racism. It does, however, rearticulate racial ideology by employing code words such as "maintenance of community", or the ideology of the "family" in the case of the busing debates, arguing for "traditional" life-styles and families in the case of monitoring textbooks, opposing multiculturalism, and emphasizing the well-worn notion of "reverse discrimination". On the issue of affirmative action, the New Right simply rearticulates the meaning of "fairness" and "equality" by arguing that the state has accommodated unfairly to special-interest groups such as minority groups at the expense of well-deserving white males.[32] Thus, the New Right joins racist and sexist sentiments in its focus on the "traditional family" and reaffirms white male supremacy.

The New Right agenda offers a powerful social movement with which white working class males may ally in the future. With the demise of the traditional labor movement in the United States, and the rise of the New Right, it is possible to argue that if white working class males see their identity as collective and articulate with a broader movement, it will be that of the New Right, which has the potential to consolidate the already existing sexism and racism in the male identity. While

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[31] M. Omi and H. Winant, Racial Formation in the United States (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), p. 120. It is worth noting here that analysts suggest that similar trends are in evidence in the U.K. See also P. Gordan and F. Klug, New Right, New Racism (Nottingham: Russell Press, 1989).

[32] Omi and Winant [n. 31 above].

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this racism and sexism at the moment is expressed largely individually, the New Right may well encourage these sentiments to become shared or felt as collective. Therefore, it is arguably the case that as these males mature, the New Right, as a social movement, will be able to offer shape and form to male working class identity, thus changing the direction of working class male politics from union politics to that of the New Right.[33]

My point here is that the pro-family rhetoric and coded racism of the New Right fit smoothly with the desire for male dominant homes and expressed racism in the young white male working class. While there is still a certain privileging of the white male voice on racism and sexism in sites like schools, that privileging is unlikely to offset the real loss of privilege in the new economy. White male working class voices are likely to become angrier and angrier. They are now expressed in a largely individualistic fashion but may soon be collectively expressed, given the very real match between voice in male youth identity and the rightist social movement.[34]

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[33] Ibid., chapter 7.

[34] It is noteworthy that in Buffalo, New York, two-thirds of the anti-abortion protestors in recent months have been male, and the leadership is entirely male. These are fundamentalist rather than Catholic groups. Although I am not certain of the social class of these males, it is noteworthy that the group is so heavily male dominated. My thanks to Maxine Seller for pointing this out to me.

The "Public" in Public Schools: The Social Construction/Constriction of Moral Communities[1]

Michelle Fine
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Public schools constitute moral communities. While this statement will appear self-evident to some, it surely requires elaboration for others. To the extent that any state offers public education, every child and adolescent in that state is assured legal access to it. Moreover, that access is deemed essential for social and economic participation in democratic society.[2] But because public schooling in our society is considered a social good available to all children, we sometimes forget that it is socially distributed and that decisions about how it **should be** distributed are ever reconsidered.

Public schooling further fits the criteria for moral communities in that political negotiations, although typically unacknowledged, determine who shall enter, remain in, and become excluded from these communities. Policies and practices in schools regularly influence the following: Who gets what? How much should they get? In what contexts? For how long? Toward what ends? Who is entitled to receive special resources? How can fair allocations of tax resources be determined and sustained?[3] How should student bodies be comprised according to race, class, and gender to assure diversity, equity, and excellence?[4]

Optow has described three defining characteristics of moral community: collective considerations of fairness, reallocations of community resources, and personal sacrifices for others.[5] Community monies are explicitly redistributed for the "common good",[6] and citizens are required to pay taxes to meet the educational

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[1] This article appeared previously in the Journal of Social Issues. Permission has been granted to reprint.

[2] W. Ryan, Equality (New York: Vintage, 1982).

[3] M. E. Goertz, Dissemination of School Finance Services in Urban School Districts (Princeton, NJ.: Education Policy Research Institute, Educational Testing Service, 1982).

[4] A. Bastian, N. Fruchter, M. Gittell, C. Greer and K. Haskins, Choosing Dquality: The Case for Democratic Schooling (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986).

[5] S. Optow, "Moral Exclusion and Injustice: An Introduction", Journal of Social Issues (1990), 46,1: 1-20.

[6] M.G. Raskin, The Common Good: Its Politics, Policies, and Philosophy (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986).

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needs of other individuals. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that public schools constitute moral communities.

Educational Exclusion for the "Common Good"

If we begin with the assumption that public schools compromise moral communities, we must recognize that in the 1990s the issue of exclusion from public schools no longer revolves around the simple matter of access. All children can receive public schooling by virtue of the compulsory educational laws of the 1920s, the decision in Brown v. Board of Education in Topeka, Kansas, and then Brown II, the Bilingual Education Acts, Public Law 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act), and the development of the Harvey Milk School at the Institute for the Protection of Lesbian and Gay Youths in New York City. With **access** to this moral community established as legitimate and universal, the issue of social justice has shifted to the process of exclusion, that is, students' differential **experiences** and *outcomes* once inside these communities.[7]

The present paper offers a conceptual analysis of educational ideologies and practices that attempts to justify, in the name of the common good, what is actually exclusion from public education.[8] Drawing on three cases involving public high schools, this analysis describes how the concepts of "merit", "choice", and "tradition" have been used to legitimate and gloss over the exclusion of some students from their public schools. The three cases are quite distinct in the nature of the exclusion and the ideologies that supported it. My involvement across the three, however, shared a common quality, for in each case my work began when students' exclusion was being negotiated.

Overview of Case Settings

At Comprehensive High School (a pseudonym) in New York City, I worked as a qualitative social researcher, engaged in a year-long ethnography seeking to understand how an urban comprehensive high school could have dropout rates that

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[7] H.A. Giroux, Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life: Critical Pedagogy in the Modern Age (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); A.G. Hilliard (III), "Public Support for Successful Instructional Practices for At-Risk Students", Council of Chief State School Officers (eds.), School Success for Students at Risk (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), pp. 195-208; D. Meier, "Central Park East: An alternative story", in Phi Delta Kappan (1987), 68: 753-757.

[8] Raskin, [n. 6 above].

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exceeded half of any ninth grade cohort. The research was conducted within the school and in the neighboring community where the low income African-American and Latino students resided. It focused on the institutional production of high school dropouts, a form of exclusion that may be likened to a **slow leak** from this moral community.

Dwight Morrow High School in Englewood, New Jersey, is an integrated high school that serves as the public school for residents of Englewood and neighboring Englewood Cliffs. The Board of Education of Englewood Cliffs, representing a community of primarily affluent white and Asian parents, initiated litigation, seeking to send its students to Tenafly High School, a neighboring public high school, the student body of which is almost exclusively white or Asian and affluent. I was brought in to study and then testify about interracial and interclass relations within the two schools. The exclusion here involved class and race exclusivity at Tenafly High, the school which the Englewood Cliffs' Board of Education sought to join. The situation may be likened to a **spontaneous break** in this moral community, surfacing abruptly through the litigation.

The third case involved an elite public boys' school, Central High School in Philadelphia. In the midst of gender-based litigation, I was invited to document the impact of young women's exclusion from attendance at Central High. The situation here may be considered a historically sustained form of exclusion.

My inquiries originated at the exit doors of Comprehensive High, and in the courtrooms where arguments over inclusion at Dwight Morrow, Tenafly, and Central High were being litigated. Drawing on the details of these distinct cases, this paper explores the justificatory ideologies and practices of several different kinds of moral exclusion from contemporary public high schools, and the resultant construction of ironically exclusive "public communities".

The Cases: Methods and Analyses

Dropouts from Comprehensive High School: A Slow Leak Due to "Academic Inability"

In September 1984, I recorded in my field notes the statement of the principal of Comprehensive High School, welcoming parents to the school:

> Welcome to Comprehensive High. We are proud to say that eighty percent of our graduates go on to college.

The W. T. Grant Foundation had funded my year-long ethnography to study the question, "Why do urban students drop out of high school?" But after three months in the field, an equally compelling question surfaced -- "Why do they stay?" At Comprehensive High, a zoned high school in upper Manhattan, the student body was predominantly African-American and Latino, low income and working class. In the fall I conducted observations four days a week throughout the school, in the dean's office, guidance office, attendance room, lunchroom, and the library. I attended classes regularly, in English, English as a second language, sociology and hygiene, and sporadically in bookkeeping, remedial reading, typing, history, chemistry and music.[9]

To complement the rich qualitative information being gathered, a cohort analysis of over 1,400 students who began ninth grade in 1978-1979 was used to estimated the percent that had graduated, dropped out, or transferred over six years. Working closely with the Parents' Association, the union chapter chair, community advocates, and the principal, and interviewing well over fifty recent and previous dropouts, I was able to develop an understanding of the dynamics that helped turn a majority of the entering high school students into dropouts.[10]

A glimpse of the quantitative data may give readers a sense of the scope of exclusion that powerfully affected this public urban high school. Of the 1,430 students who formed the 1978-1979 ninth grade cohort, only twenty percent ultimately had graduated from this school by June of 1985 (their seventh year). The sixty-six percent dropout rate (a significant percentage had transferred) stood in stark contrast to the principal's pronouncement. Those who graduated were almost all headed for college. Most, however, were destined never to make it to the graduation ceremony.[11]

At Comprehensive High, as elsewhere, two ideologies prevailed to explain the high dropout rates: inadequate academic ability and student choice. But

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[9] For a detailed analysis of methods, see M. Fine, "Why Urban Adolescents Drop Into and Out of High School, in G. Natriello (ed.), School Dropouts: Patterns and Policies (New York: Teachers College Press, 1987), pp. 89-105; and M. Fine, Framing Dopouts: Notes on the Plitics of an Uban High School (Albany: SUNY Press, in press).

[10] Ibid.

[11] United State Civil Rights Commission, Unemployment and Underemployment Among Blacks, Hispanics, and Women (Washington, DC.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982).

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ethnographic work revealed that low income adolescents leave high school for a myriad of reasons. Some left to care for families: "My momma has lupus, and I must care for her, my sisters and brothers. Later for me."

Others doubted the taken-for-granted (middle class)linear relation between a high school diploma and future economic security: "Reason I stay in school is 'cause every morning I see this bum sleeping by the subway and I think 'not me', but then I think, 'Bet he has a high school diploma'." Still others challenged the traditional curriculum, which severed what they knew historically, culturally, and personally from what was presented as truth.[12] Here is an example:

> November 2, English Class.
> [White female teacher in discussion with students about a recent shooting that occurred outside the school.]
>
> Teacher: Can you imagine any circumstances under which killing would be justified?
>
> Opal: If a guy tries to beat up my mother, I'd kill him.
>
> Teacher: Well, it's not likely that your mother would be beat up. She would have to be in a fight with someone she knew.
>
> Alicia: Shit, Missy, what city you live in?

Many students felt coerced to leave, told by administrators that they had been absent too often, or that they could not return after having been suspended. A student's mother reported:

> When they discharged my son, I thought it was over, until the guidance counselor told me that the Dean couldn't do it (i.e., legally keep her son out of school). But she told me not to tell them that she told me. I knew it was a cover-up then.

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[12] L. Delpit, "The Silenced Dialogue", Harvard Educational Review (1988), 58: 280-298; and, M. Fine [n. 9 (1987b) above].

Finally, there were students whom one might say willfully dropped out, that is, "by choice". Throughout September these students entered the attendance office, perhaps six each morning, saying, "I'm seventeen and I want to drop out". Appropriate papers were handed to them, which students were asked to sign and get a parent or guardian to cosign. Given a sheet of paper listing outreach centers and Graduate Equivalence Diploma (GED) programs, these adolescents were discharged into a world devoid of the opportunities they imagined available. None was told that at 48.5 percent, New York State has the lowest national GED pass rate; none was told that it is difficult to get into military service without a diploma (as many planned to do), and that those accepted have an extremely high rate of less-than-honorable discharge; and none was told that the private business schools, in which many planned to enroll, had reputations of unethical recruitment practices, dishonest promises, and seventy percent dropout rates. One dean explained to me:

> In a system like this you need boundaries. I can't worry about kids after they're gone. It's tough enough while they are here. My job is like the pilot on a hijacked plane. I have to throw off the hijackers.

Two-thirds of the students were considered the alleged hijackers, while passengers constituted only twenty percent of the original students.[13]

The story from Comprehensive High represents an exclusion that may be considered a **slow leak** from this moral community. While those with poor academic histories left predictably early, most low income adolescents who were ever in attendance at Central High School eventually exited prior to graduation. They left in ways that were institutionalized, invisible, and accepted as if inevitable. However, this outcome raises the question: Would the public accept "lack of ability" or students' "personal choice" as sound justification if two-thirds of a white, middle class student body disappeared prior to graduation? Or would we reject these rationalizations and be outraged by such educational exclusion?

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[13] See analyses in Fine [n. 9 above].

Dwight Morrow and Tenafly High Schools: A Spontaneous Break for "Parental Choice"

The case of Board of Education of the Borough of Englewood Cliffs v. Board of Education of the City of Englewood v. Board of Education of the Borough of Tenafly raises another set of questions about educational exclusion, this time through litigation. The case was brought by the Board of Education of the Borough of Englewood Cliffs, representing primarily affluent white and Asian parents seeking to take their children **out** of an integrated public high school. This case pits demands for parental choice squarely against demands for racial and class equity.

In 1987, three contiguous public school districts were involved in litigation over where students from Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, should attend public high school. A community too small in population to warrant its own high school, Englewood Cliffs sent its adolescents to a neighboring public high school. The one public high school in Englewood City, Dwight Morrow High School, had a student body that was integrated according to race and class, including approximately twenty percent low income, sixty-six percent black, eighteen percent Latino, twelve percent white, and four percent Asian.

The Board of Education of Englewood Cliffs sued to sever its sending-receiving relationship with Englewood City, arguing that the Cliffs parents should be allowed to send their secondary students to Tenafly High School (THS), located in a neighboring, predominately white, affluent community, rich in resources, and impressive in mean standardized test scores. The student body at THS was eighty percent white, eighteen percent Asian, one percent black, and one percent Hispanic, with virtually no low income students. Over the prior five years, Tenafly High School had already accepted large numbers of students from Englewood Cliffs on a private tuition basis. At the time of the litigation, a full twelve percent of Tenafly High School students was paying $5,480 per year to attend this public high school, and over the prior five years, eighty-two percent of them had come from either Englewood or Englewood Cliffs.

The Board of Education of Englewood City sought to: (1) retain the sending-receiving relationship between Englewood Cliffs and Englewood City, (2) impose an injunction against Tenafly High School's private tuition policy, and (3) regionalize the three districts. In the words of the attorneys for Englewood City:

> Without question, regionalization is necessary to root out racial segregation and to advance the objectives in all

> three districts... If all Cliffs and some Englewood students are welcome to cross the border to receive their education at THS (Tenafly High School) -- not only welcome, but so desired that the Tenafly Board has fought to avoid injunction -- why not others? Why not those who are not affluent and cannot afford tuition? Why not those who are not the brightest and the best, but are average kids who can be motivated to succeed? Why not special education children? Why not more Blacks and more Hispanics? Why not regionalization?[14]

The Board of Education of Englewood Cliffs argued that the educational quality at Dwight Morrow High School was inferior, and that the principle of parental choice should enable parents to opt out of Dwight Morrow High School. From the point of view of Englewood City, however, these notions of "quality" and "choice" were thinly veiled strategies to facilitate racial prejudice and white flight. "Quality" was a euphemism for racial and class segregation; "choice" was being espoused for predominately wealthy white and Asian parents. A decision to sever the sending-receiving relationship, Englewood argued, would provoke an **impression** in Englewood of poor educational quality despite evidence to the contrary, and would facilitate a community-wide exodus of middle class parents across race/ethnic groups from Dwight Morrow High School, thus eroding the race and class integration of the school and undermining state interests in educational equity and quality through diversity.

I served as an expert witness for Englewood City. I was invited by the Board of Education of Englewood City to study the social, academic, and psychological climate surrounding integration at Dwight Morrow High School, to investigate how African-American, white, Latino, and Asian-American students viewed their school and the litigation, and to ask how they would feel if the Englewood Cliffs students were permitted to leave. I also interviewed a small sample of young women and men at Tenafly High School to ascertain their views of race relations, the litigation, and the consequences, should Englewood Cliffs' petition prevail. Over the course of the year I conducted in-depth observations at Dwight Morrow, held extensive interviews with administrators, faculty, and over twenty students, both individually and in groups. I also interviewed eight students

[14] A. Mytelka and P. Trachtenberg, Legal Brief for the Board of Education of the Borough of Englewood Cliffs v. Board of Education of the City of Englewood v. Board of Education of the Borough of Tenafly (Newark, 1987), p. 7.

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individually at Tenafly High School. The students represented different racial, ethnic, and social class groups. Some were selected because of their active involvement in school activities, while other were chosen randomly.

The arguments posed by the lawyers were echoed by the students interviewed. Students at Dwight Morrow spoke generously and proudly of the virtues of racial and class integration. In contrast, the interviews conducted with the students from Tenafly High School reflected what seemed to be the chilling effects of an elite, segregated public education. Only one of the Tenafly students indicated any concern for the social and racial issued raised by the lawsuit. A young Asian boy stated simply, "It does not seem like discrimination". The remaining seven assured me that:

> You should do what the majority wants, and the majority from the Cliffs wants to come here.
>
> I don't want to attend school with kids who wear torn clothes.
>
> They (the black students at Dwight Morrow) can pay to come here also. If blacks can't afford it, they should go to school with blacks. You are out for yourself.
>
> My parents pay taxes and so I deserve the best education possible.
>
> Never thought about it.
>
> Tenafly is like a private school; people dress nice and come from good homes.

The interviews from Tenafly were truly sobering. In the short duration of our time together, these students expressed positions that displayed a candid disregard for people less fortunate than they, or merely different. In my expert report, I discussed these interviews as follows:

> The extent to which these students, privileged by social class and race, take for granted their "entitlement" and perceive no social consequence in having a basically Black high school and basically White high school

> separated by only a few miles, suggests the dramatic extent to which segregation reinforces, in the minds of White students, a sense of inherent superiority and the justice of unjust outcomes.[15]

I concluded that these Tenafly students were taught in a segregated context, denied the thorough and efficient education that New Jersey law requires, miseducated socially, and deprived of the diverse social and academic experiences available to students at Dwight Morrow High.

The litigating Board of Education from Englewood Cliffs was asking for the creation of an educational community organized through class and racial exclusion, and asking that this be sanctioned by the state. The board sought this form of education partially through the popular language of "parental choice". But like notions of "inadequate academic ability" and "student choice" at Comprehensive High, here parental choice to leave Dwight Morrow High School and attend Tenafly incorporated a social ideology that argued for, at the same time that it obscured, educational exclusion.

Both the New Jersey State Commissioner of Education and the presiding Administrative Law Judge found the arguments of Englewood Cliffs uncompelling. They rejected the "poor quality" argument, determined that Dwight Morrow High School provided quality education, and found that a change of homogeneous Tenafly High School would deprive Englewood Cliffs students of the enriching educational benefits of diversity. The Commissioner determined that Englewood Cliffs' relationship with Dwight Morrow High School would not be severed, and that Tenafly would be forbidden to accept students from Englewood and Englewood Cliffs as private tuition students. Regionalization, however, was denied. No parties are appealing the decision.

While parental choice and constant parental search for educational quality need not be incompatible with educational equity,[16] the rhetoric of choice typically enters educational discourse when a privileged group seeks refuge from one public context and entrance into another, more elite context. From the perspective of the Englewood Cliffs Board, and in the attitudes that seemed to permeate Tenafly High

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[15] M. Fine, Expert Report for Board of Education of the Borough of Englewood Cliffs v. Board of Education of the City of Englewood v. Board of Education of the Borough of Tenafly (Newark, 1987a), p. 15.

[16] A. Bastian, Unwrapping the Package: Some Thoughts on School Choice (New York: New World Foundation, 1989).

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School, exclusion appeared to be the motivation behind erroneous assertions of poor quality and demands for parental choice.

Central High School: Historically Sustained Exclusion to Preserve "Tradition"

In late 1984, progressive men throughout Philadelphia called to beg me not to testify on behalf of gender integration of Central High School: "Oh no, not Central. It's a great school. A great tradition. Don't let it fall. It will be ruined." I grew suspicious rather quickly. The voice of Zero Mostel echoed repeatedly: "TRADITION!" I asked myself, "whose tradition?"

In Elizabeth Newberg, Pauline King and Jessica Bonn v. the Board of Public Education School District of Philadelphia, three adolescent women sued for access to Central High School, the most prestigious public high school in Philadelphia. Central High had the highest mean test scores in the city, prided itself on fine resources and private endowment, and still enjoys a national reputation as one of the top public schools in the country. Because Central and Girls' High School comprised the only elite academic public high schools in Philadelphia, students who attended them came from across the city.

The three young women who initiated the suit had been students at Girls' High (two were still there at the time of the litigation). With budding feminist sensibilities, they felt entitled to "attend the best school in the city"; they believed they deserved access to Central, and they argued that a public institution that stood for exclusion on the basis of gender was inherently discriminatory. In contrast, the defense for preserving Central High as a single-sex school stood firmly on the foundation of tradition. Young women's exclusion was justified by a long and proud Philadelphia custom specifying that this institution should be one in which young men could socialize with other young men without the "distraction of young women's presence.

The rhetoric of tradition was well managed. One-third of the judges in Philadelphia were alleged to be graduates of Central High School. Many graduates swore on the stand to Central's history of academic excellence, and that this excellence was inseparably keyed to its being an all-male school. Adult men testified that they still carried Central High School cards in their wallets, displayed Central High School bachelor's degree diplomas on their office walls, and they recalled with romance and misty eyes their days as young boys at Central.

My involvement in this school came in two waves. In 1984, I was invited to testify about the value of gender integration and the social and academic impact of sustaining an exclusively male public high school. In preparation, I interviewed the three young women plaintiffs extensively, spoke with administrators at Central High, and read thoroughly the literature on gender segregation and integration in secondary school. My second wave of involvement with Central High came four years later, through supervision of a dissertation by Arlene Holtz on the long-term impact of the lawsuit on Central's school climate and gender relations.[17]

In 1984, after intensive interviews with the young women, I concluded that the judicial sanctioning of an exclusively male public high school could reinforce in the minds of the general public, the young men at the school, and young women and men throughout the city, that males were essentially superior. It could legitimate sex-based discrimination and seemingly substantial poplar beliefs about biological differences between male and female educational capabilities. The trial ended with the judge (who was not a graduate of Central High) ruling in favor of the plaintiffs. The graduating class of 1985 was therefore the last to be all male. The President of the Alumni Association, in an address to this group, is quoted by Holtz as saying:

> This brings to an end a tradition that has lasted almost 150 years. We of the Alumni Association think that this is just one of the traditions that has made Central High School absolutely the finest high school in America.[18]

The class sponsor concluded his remarks in kind:

> So in the future when we should meet. Let us remember the last of the elite.

To this day, Central's nationally reputed archive, the official chronicle of the institution's history, remains silent on the litigation. There is no evidence of the young women's victory. According to Holtz, many young women students

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[17] A. Holtz, Central High: An Ethnographic Study of Court Ordered Female Integration at the Prestigious Public High School. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania.

[18] Ibid., p. 16.

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seemingly have been accepted by the young men and some faculty at Central, but the acceptance is often shown by disparaging the young women attending school next door -- at Girls' High.[19] And so a tradition of exclusion still prevails, although in a revised form.

How Ideologies Facilitate and Obscure Exclusion

In contexts of universal access such as public education, moral exclusion occurs routinely but is obscured by social ideologies of justice. Such ideologies rationalize exclusion practices and justify existing boundaries. More profoundly, they seem to comfort those individuals who are insiders.

Critical theorist Catherine Besley describes social ideology as:

> **real** in that it is the way in which people really live their relationship to the social relations which govern their conditions of existence, but **imaginary** in that it discourages a full understanding of these conditions of existence and the ways in which people are socially constituted within them.[20]

The ideologies surrounding school exclusion -- academic inability at Comprehensive High, parental choice to attend Tenafly High, and tradition at Central High -- provided coherence and meaning to the institutions and individuals that spawned them. But these ideologies also required the exclusion of some groups, and made it seem as if their absence were simply for the collective best.[21]

At Comprehensive High, students once included as community members were ushered out with a rationale ostensibly based on **merit**. Over time, two-thirds of the students were viewed as inferior and perceptually transformed into a threat to the well-being of those who remained. Likewise, using the language of **choice**, the Englewood Cliffs Board of Education argued that parents should be able to choose their public schools, and their children should be offered what they saw as "the

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[19] Holtz, [n. 17 above].

[20] C. Besley, Critical Practice (London: Methuen, 1980), p. 46. Emphasis added.

[21] M. Pratt, "Scratches On the Face of the Country: Or What Mr. Barrow Saw in the Land of Bushmen", in H.L. Gates, Jr. (ed.), "Race," Writing and Difference (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 138-162; and, Raskin, [n. 6 above].

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best" -- in this case, a school segregated by race and class. Dwight Morrow High, and its students "with torn clothes", were viewed as a threat to their children's intellectual growth. According to this perception, by receiving a class and racially segregated education, elite children would presumably serve the common good most effectively.

Finally, the ideology of **tradition** at Central High also invoked a nostalgic image of a common good. Couched in the language of history, order, and "the way things have always been", tradition comforted its devotees. When the tradition of male bonding at Central High was brought under legal scrutiny, there were public pronouncements that the school would be destroyed. The common good could presumably be salvaged only if the school remained all male.

When Exclusion is Challenged

The image of a single common good unravels once the diverse needs and entitlements of those placed outside the "deserving" community are revealed. In these three cases, once notions of tradition, male bonding, natural academic abilities, and quality education were stripped of their seemingly objective neutrality, they revealed a set of **educational** contexts that had survived largely through slow, spontaneous, or sustained exclusion. Upon close examination, each of these three schools seemed to have salvaged its internal meaning and identity by constructing partial and perverse images of discarded others. For Comprehensive High, the discarded group was dropouts, for Englewood Cliffs and Tenafly High School, low income students and students of color, and at Central High, young women. In contrast to these **discarded others**, the students, faculty, and parents who "belonged" enjoyed a righteous sense of these collective selves -- they were smarter, classier, or more masculine.

But once the "other" emerged as a critical and deserving subject (through research and/or litigation), the rationalizations for maintaining an exclusive community grew fragile. At these points, the illicit use of moral exclusion to maintain a moral community was rendered visible: insiders were held together largely by feelings of superiority to the excluded group outside.

Consequences of Moral Exclusion in Public Education

What is the moral of this story about moral communities? It is frightening to consider that public schools claim universal inclusion, yet invent highly exclusive boundaries to control who is actually in and out, and then represent these boundaries as protecting the "common good". While the notions of merit, choice and tradition may appear to be liberal, benign ideologies of public schools, they actually provide a cover for moral exclusion, and carry sweeping consequences for those excluded; they even damage those who are ostensibly protected.

Consider these "protected" individuals. They are the young women and men who graduated from Comprehensive High and witnessed sixty-six percent of their peers drop out or be pushed out while no one protested. Students at Tenafly High suffered socially deficient education and were trained to believe they deserved, simply by virtue of race and class privilege, an exclusionary school. And young men at Central High long recognized that female students were being denied entrance into the finest school in the city of Philadelphia simply because they were young women. Across the three schools, students were being educated within publicly sanctioned communities of exclusion, sheltered from a rich education of diversity and critique. But even worse, the schools taught these young women and men to see public exclusion as natural, justifiable, and, perhaps, even necessary for the common good.

The analysis in this article challenges scholars and practitioners interested in public education to probe beneath the surface of ostensibly neutral (even "progressive") ideologies, and to expose the dynamics of moral exclusion which are often veiled by liberal arguments phrased in terms of the supposed "common good".

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